



Hannah and Soraya's Fully Magic Generation-Y *Snowflake* Road Trip across America

James Ward

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*Hannah and Soraya's Fully Magic Generation-Y *Snowflake* Road Trip across America is a contemplative novel driven by the wanderlust of contemporary thirtysomethings.*

In James Ward's quirky novel *Hannah and Soraya's Fully Magic Generation-Y *Snowflake* Road Trip across America*, two women in need of a creative recharge take a trip across the US.

Hannah, the book's voice and conscience, is the manager of a socially aware rock band. Soraya is its singer. They live in the UK, where they and their friends are dubbed "snowflakes" and "social justice warriors" because of their interests and attitudes. In a creative funk, they decide to travel to the United States for an exhaustive road trip, hoping to see if post-2016 America is as different as everyone says. Besides becoming obsessed with Walmart, the women learn what it means to have an identity, what creative integrity means, and what the future looks like for the next generation.

The book's short, anecdotal chapters focus on mundane topics including a shopping list and a visit to a Greyhound station. Most about Hannah and Soraya's misadventures as they search for creative "roots" in an increasingly rootless world, the novel casts both as oft-disparaged millennials who become emblematic of their generation: left wing, educated women afflicted with wanderlust. They seek the "real America" by eschewing tourist traps like Las Vegas and the Grand Canyon in favor of small towns, out-of-the-way spots, and open spaces; they indulge in live performances of their music.

Hannah's humor is a constant: in a sharp, incisive voice, she takes in all of the eccentricities of Britain and the US. Some of the funniest scenes take place in the US, where Hannah, Soraya, and Hannah's sisters stumble upon a revolving cast of Boomer weirdos, musical con artists, and countless strange individuals. Hannah provides a running commentary on every American location that she visits, from the hills of West Virginia to the streets of San Francisco.

That the story is serpentine makes it sometimes exhausting; its moments form an endless loop, and each features the women getting into an odd or funny predicament. Though the American road trip is meant to be a voyage of discovery, neither Hannah nor Soraya grows much by the book's end: they are still the same cosmopolitan Brits, if they feel that they have their musical chops back.

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BENJAMIN WELTON (May 8, 2020)

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