



Just Go Down to the Road

James Campbell

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James Campbell's *Just Go Down to the Road* is a humble and humorous memoir about the youthful pursuit of literary success.

By fourteen, Campbell, who was born and raised in Glasgow, was fluent in thievery and truancy. He was caught stealing books with a friend, and the two were locked in a jail cell and served “bacon sandwiches...dripping with butter, unforgettably good, and large mugs of milky tea.” He was then forced to drop out of school at fifteen, after which he worked in a drab printer's shop. He chucked the job after three years to thumb his way through Europe, the Near East, and North Africa during the 1960s and 1970s.

Though India was Campbell's goal, his lack of funds and unexpected encounters landed him on a Greek island. There, despite never having been on a horse, he was hired to take tourists on horseback tours. Later, in Israel, Campbell worked on a kibbutz and played music with Fleetwood Mac's lead guitarist.

Throughout his travels, craftiness and serendipity were used to meet Campbell's needs. Tiring of the life of a vagabond, he gathered enough money to return to Scotland, where university studies, a steady job, and further luck helped his literary career unfold. Among his many published books are a travel book on Scotland; a biography of his friend James Baldwin; and *Gate Fever: Voices from a Prison*, for which Campbell lived part time in England's high security Lewes Prison.

Just Go Down to the Road brings an exciting time in world and literary history to life. It's a remarkable travel account that began with the simple suggestion: “Just go down to the road, Jim. You'll get a lift.”

KRISTINE MORRIS (May / June 2022)

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