ForeWord Reviews

Take Me With You: A Round-the-World Journey to Invite a Stranger Home
Brad Newsham
Travelers' Tales
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“Yankee go home, and take me with you,” read the bumper sticker fastened to a smoking jeepney chugging down one of the soot-laden streets of Manila. Third World-trotter Newsham believed that few people would turndown a free ticket to America.

In Take Me With You, Newsham, a San Francisco cab driver and freelance writer for the San Francisco Chronicle, regales the reader with his humanistic observations and experiences of a 100 day journey. Newsham is not a tourist, one who tours for pleasure or culture, but more of an adventurer, one who undertakes risk and danger.

This book is part of Traveler’s Tales’ Footsteps: The Soul of Travel series. The journey was to the Philippines, India, Egypt, Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. Because of his enthusiasm for travel, Newsham, on an earlier excursion to Afghanistan, made himself a promise: “Someday when I am rich I will invite a stranger home.” He didn’t become rich, but he did invite someone home.

One of Newsham’s adventures was to Luzon, a remote mountainous village of Malayan people. There he met gentle, well spoken, twenty-two-year-old Tony, a shop manager and rice terrace farmer. After chatting with Tony for awhile Newsham asks, “What is the worst thing that has happened to you?” “Some one hit it out with a hammer,” referring to his eyeball. He received that, broken ribs, and a shattered jaw for his part in breaking up a fight.

Newsham meets many other people with sad, humorous, or wisdom stories during his 100-day excursion. They include Ezekiel who came to Manila to bury his mother, subsequently losing his wallet to thieves; Tibetan Ram Ashray Prashad in the Himalayans who answers “To know God” to the question “What is the purpose of life?”; Mohammed Ali, a New Delhi professional ear cleaner with Q-tips in his turban; and Mahmoud, a donkey-riding Egyptian teenager, who invited Newsham to tea.

Newsham writes with humor and wit. He has a penchant for noting bumper stickers and signs; one next to a jeepney driver going up a treacherous mountain: “No Matter What Don’t Scream.” He notes the proliferation of bloody Jesus crosses on walls, and after remarking about dog as delicacy, he mentions the silence of an early morning street, wagging his tail with: “Even the dogs were silent, but they had good reason.” Newsham also intermittently reminds the reader

of the mystery afoot of who will be invited home.

Judi Oswald