

*Road Trip*

Essays by Mark Rozema  
ISBN 978-1-59709-994-3  
Binding: Tradepaper  
Size: 5 x 8; Pages: 144  
Price: US \$15.95

Pub Date: September 15, 2015



Mark Rozema



**For more information contact:**

Alisa Trager  
Marketing Associate  
marketing@redhen.org

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(800) 621-2736  
orders@press.uchicago.edu  
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In a series of autobiographical essays, *Road Trip* celebrates the transformative graces of nature, the healing power of music, the exhilaration of sports, and the sustaining stories of family.

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*Road Trip* is a collection of autobiographical essays that honor the places, people and other living creatures that have given shape and meaning to one man's life. Framed by essays about the life and death of loved ones, the book explores the importance of family, friendship and what it means to care for another human being. Above all, *Road Trip* is about transformations that happen in ways we may not always understand or welcome—it's about traveling down unknown and unexpected roads with good humor, generosity and a spirit of adventure.

## Praise for *Road Trip*

"A series of essays delicately evoking nature's power and mystery. . . . Rozema meditates on wildness, living, and dying; on spirituality, transcendence, and epiphany; and on music, friendship, and longing. . . . A brief but impressive debut collection."

—*Kirkus Reviews*

"In these essays of exploration and quest, Mark Rozema relates tales of danger and exhilaration, serenity and solace, the sustenance of his own experiences and those of the people he meets traveling 'a road that pulls you.' Rozema's easy, narrative prose . . . often becomes beautifully lyrical, touching the power of what wild land and sky together mean to the human soul."

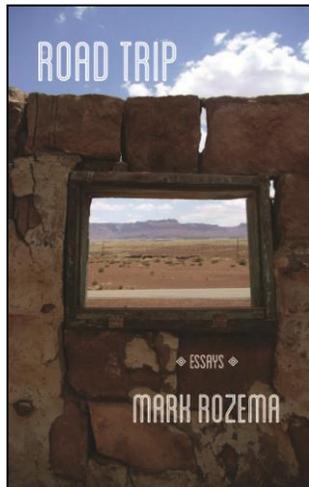
—Pattiann Rogers, author of *Firekeeper*, *Generations* and *Holy Heathen Rhapsody*

"In *Road Trip*, essayist Mark Rozema takes us along on a journey over several decades, as he comes to terms with change and loss, including losing his father to Alzheimer's disease. In prose clear and luminous as 'stones at the bottom of the river,' he reminds us of the power of place. . . . Next time you take a road trip, you'll want Mark Rozema at the wheel; his lyric, engaging prose offers readers many moments of stunning beauty and much well-earned wisdom."

—Holly J. Hughes, author of *Sailing by Ravens*

## Biographical Note

Mark Rozema's writing celebrates the ways in which identity is shaped by relationships to landscape, community and family. His essays can be found in various journals, including *Flyway*, *Weber Studies*, *Isthmus*, *Under the Sun*, *Sport Literate*, and *Superstition Review*. He received an MFA from the University of Montana in 1990 and currently lives in Shoreline, Washington.



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**More Praise for *Road Trip***

“The best writing, like a deep breath and a clear thought, seems effortless. Such are the essays in *Road Trip*. Rozema covers ground—a lot of it. Witness Alaska’s Resurrection River ‘as it tumbles through wind-sheared tundra.’ ‘Glissade down narrow snow chutes’ surrounding Washington’s Enchantment Basin. Tour the sifting cinder hill country northeast of Flagstaff. In these essays, landscape details are precise and sensual but unstudied, delivered by an introspective writer who’s not just ‘been there,’ but in memory, desire, and regret, lives there. *Take this trip*. Let Mark Rozema guide you into ‘a world of curves, where every turn leads to surprise.’ You’ll find such beauty here.”

—Ann Cummins, author of *Yellowcake* and *Red Ant House*.

**From *Road Trip***

My father asks, for the fifth time, if we are on Highway 160. Yes, I tell him. “Why does the road keep changing direction?” he asks. This too is a question he’s asked already. Taking my eye off the road just long enough to meet his gaze for a consoling moment, I reply, “We’re in the mountains, Dad. It’s hard to go in a straight line.”

My father's eyes are a startling sky blue, the blue of high desert sky on an October day. I'm tempted to describe them as piercing, which is both a cliché and not quite right. They do not pierce, which is an aggressive verb, and my father is not an aggressive man. But they do hold one's attention. Until recently, I would say that those eyes gave the accurate impression of an agile mind at work—neurons making connections, integrating information, tracing implications, putting together the pieces of the world. They are the eyes of someone who wants, always, to understand. I have seen laughter in his eyes, curiosity, always intelligence and decency—and never have I seen malice, hatred, or duplicity. Sometimes I still see in those eyes an agile mind at work, but too often now his gaze is watery and lost. I see confusion and panic. I sense misfiring neurons, holes into which my words sink and vanish. It is, increasingly, the gaze of a man entering a fog.

We are crossing the Rockies, and he has been trying to read a road map of Colorado. He doesn't know which way to hold the map, much less make sense of it. The red lines, the blue lines, the numbers and symbols and circles . . . they don't add up to anything that he can discern. This is the man who taught me how to read a map and passed along to me his love of maps. I wonder if he can put it down, give up on the need to have an abstract representation of the landscape, simply look out the window and notice a mountain, a cloud, a red-tailed hawk, a Lombardy poplar bending in the wind. It's not easy for him to do that. He wants, somehow, for the view out the window and the markings on the paper in his lap to converge, to come sharply into focus in a way that is part mathematical equation and part revelation. He wants the map to locate him.