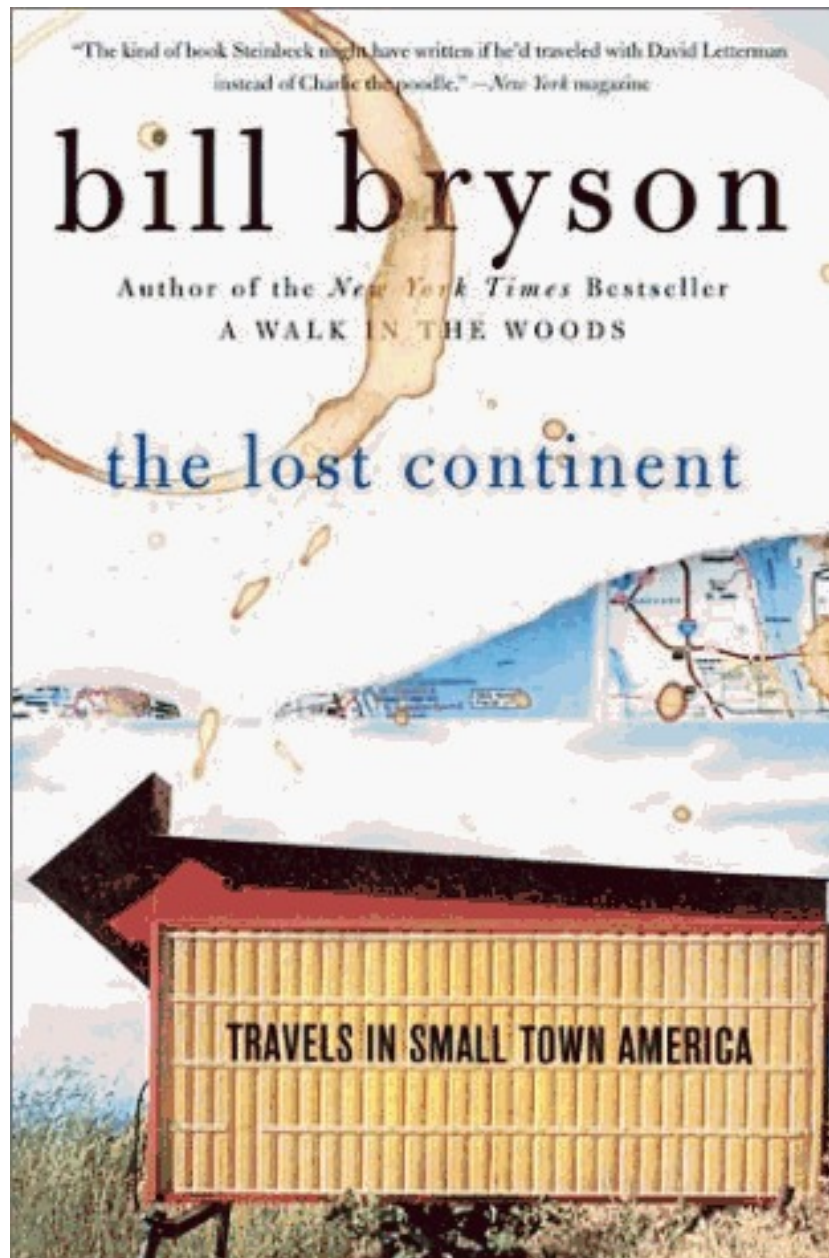


The Lost Continent: Travels in Small-Town America Book PDF Download



**By:
Bill Bryson**

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What people Say:

Leftbanker

A dyspeptic man in his middle thirties, whose constant bad mood seems more like someone in their mid seventies, drives around the U.S. and complains about absolutely everything he sees, smells, hears, and eats. If this sounds like your idea of a good time, read Bill Bryson's

(Abacus, 1990).

He constantly mocks small towns in America by referring to them by such names as Dog Water, Duncesville, Urinal, Spigot, and Hooterville—and this is in the first five pages. Don't worry about him running out of clever names for hick towns; Bryson has a million of them and he uses every single one.

The only things about which Bryson has a favorable view are natural wonders and the homes of rich people. He marvels at the obscenely-posh residences of ultra-wealthy, early 20th century industrialists on Mackinac Island which were built before income taxes and most labor laws. He would probably be thrilled with pre-revolutionary France or Czarist Russia. One of his very few favorable reviews of American cities was of the ski town of Stowe, Vermont which caters almost exclusively to the rich.

When he is traveling through the southwest he complains about the Mexican music on the radio. He seems more content to resort to chauvinism than to come to some sort of understanding about the culture he is visiting. In my opinion, it's always more interesting to praise something that you understand than to mock something that you don't. I would have taken the time to translate a few of the songs and tell readers what they are about. In fact, I have done this and Mexican ranchera music is all about stories of love, heartbreak, and often violence which describe the cowboy culture of Mexico's northern territories. Bryson implies that the people who listen to this music are just too stupid to realize that it is only one tune played over and over.

He gripes about a weatherman on TV who seems rather gleeful at the prospect of a coming snow storm yet Bryson seems to relish in the idea of not liking anything that he experiences in his journey. His entire trip is like a storm he passes through. Just once I wanted him to roll into some town that he liked and get into an interesting conversation with one of its residents.

Here are examples of the cheeriness with which Bryson opens a few of his chapters:

This last event must have brought untold joy to the young writer.

Tell us more, Bill. His narrative is more tiresome than any Kansas wheat field he may have passed

on his road trip through hell. Most Americans seem to be either fat, or stupid, or both in the eyes of Bryson. I can only assume that Bryson himself is some sort of genius body builder. Just one time I wanted him to talk to a local resident over a beer or a cup of coffee. I wanted him to describe his partner in conversation as other than fat or stupid. Not even one time do we hear about a place from somebody who lives there. We could just as easily have read the guidebooks as Bryson did and he could have stayed home and saved himself thousands of miles of misery.

Gary

It's funny how so many Americans begin their reviews of 'The Lost Continent' with statements such as "I loved Bryson's other books but this one is terrible!", all because he treats America the same way as he treats everywhere and everyone else.

So while many Americans think it's acceptable - hilarious, even - for Bryson to make disparaging-but-witty comments about non-Americans and the places they call home, it is an utter outrage for him to be anything other than completely worshipful with regard

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The unavoidable, undeniable fact of the matter is that Bill Bryson's 'The Lost Continent' is not only one of his finest works, but one of the best books ever written by anyone in recent times about the USA and Americans.

It is as funny as anything you'll ever read, as well as being touching, poignant and fascinating. It is the first book I've read since 'Neither Here Nor There' (also by Bryson) that has caused me to think of calling my travel agent.

America has never been half as interesting as it is in 'The Lost Continent' and Americans ought to be supremely grateful it was written and published.

Five stars and highly recommended.

Tommy

Well, ain't it somethin for dat rascally Mr. Bryson wit all o dat funny Northern talk to make his way down here to Dixie and spend some time wid us! We sure do 'ppreciate you takin us into your rich and well-knowed book, Mr. Bryson. And yer gosh-darn-right, God save all those poor folk who done shopped at K-Mart! They should've spent their nickels at Crate & Barrel had they knowed what to do wid demselves.....

Ciara

This is the worst book ever. Bryson is a fat, cynical white guy traveling around the country, proclaiming in the subtitle: "Travels in Small Town America." But like most fat white guys, Bryson is scared of small town America. He hates every small town he comes to- whether they're on Indian reservations, small farming communities in Nebraska, southern towns full of African Americans where the author is too scared to even stop the car, or small mining communities in West Virginia, also where the a

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where the author is too scared to even stop the car, or small mining communities in West Virginia, also where the author is too scared to stop. How can you write a book about small town America when you're too scared to stop in any small towns??? His favorite towns? Pittsburg and Charlotte. (Definitely "small" in my world.)

Driving through the north woods, crossing the border from Maine to New Hampshire: "The skies were still flat and low, the weather cold, but at least I was out of the montony of the Maine woods."

In Littleton, on the Vermont border: "People on the sidewalk smiled at me as I passed. This was beginning to worry me. Nobody, even in America, is that friendly. What did they want from me?"

At a cemetery in Vermont: "I stood there in the mile October sunshine, feeling so sorry for all these lukles speople and their lost lives, reflecting bleakly on mortality and my own dear, cherished family so far away in England, and I thought, 'Well, fuck this,' and walked back down the hill to the car."

At least he freely refers to himself as a "flinty-hearted jerk-off."

Maybe Mr. Bryson should get off his lazy ass, stop whining about England, and actually stop the car once in a while. This book spouts so much hateful white guy racism that I can't even bring myself to give it away. While I am 100% against burning or destroying any kind of book, I simply cannot let this one leave my hands. It will probably just find someone who agrees with it's horrible twisted and pessimistic point of view! I haven't decided if I'm going to just bury it in my storage space (which may mean when I leave my apartment someone else might pick it up), or "accidentally" drop it in a snowbank outside. At least in spring the pages would all be glued together, and no one would be able to read it ever again.

Claire

Sometimes I feel like I'm the only person who's noticed the fact that Bill Bryson is a smug bastard who casts a pall of depressing sarcasm over everything he writes about. I mean, I'm all for sarcasm in most cases, but it's as though all of his subjects are cheapened and made despicable by his prose. In The Lost Continent, he turns every small-town inhabitant into an ignorant, obnoxious caricature. The book has virtually nothing to offer, unless you, too, are hell-bent on whining about the const

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