

Dirt Roads

A: We're bouncing along here. Im holding the—oh shit—mic, microphone it's a little sketchy because it's hard for me to get two hands on the handlebars and hold the mic. If shit hits the fan im chucking the mic that's it it's going in the gulch. Going in the valley. Yea the road is pretty decent here compared to what it's been. Hold on—little bit of an uphill, we're gonna cross a cattleguard now. This has been the most intense day of cycling in my life. No doubt. And there have been a lot of intense days on this trips. Oh dear we're coming to a big vista. Huuge vista. What? Let's keep going.

N: This winter I went on a bicycle trip in the southwest with my friend Simon. Over two and a half weeks we rode about 600 miles from Albuquerque, New Mexico to Tucson, Arizona. We camped along the way, carrying all of our food, water, clothing, and gear in saddle bags and a trailer as we pedaled over mountains and through deserts.

A: So we're still on this hill we are dropping down into this huuuge basin this huge desert basin it's like this barren like wasteland like brown, little bit of grass but really just this brown wasteland. You can see Lordsburg around the corner and then these curtains of mountains laid out across the landscape. It's so still out here.

S: Wooooooo

A: that was simon. I think I'm gonna get going.

N: Simon is a good friend with a big beard and a deep love for messing about in the wilderness. He and I had gone on a handful of small backpacking and sailing adventures together, but for a while had dreamed of doing something big. So last summer we said, why not go on a bike trip? The time we had available was my winter break, and the Southwest seemed like a good place to go—it was dry, not too cold, and we could get there and back by train. So we went for it.

A: We are rattling down a dirt road and we've just come across some cows and I don't know what to do. Simon there's a cow in our way. I think if we go towards it it'll move but Im so scared.

N: I wish I could say this was a joke, but I am actually really scared of cows.

S: Ari's wildest dreams are coming true right now.

A: There's a cattle guard there so once we get a cross it—oh shit it's coming for us.

S: It's on our side.

A: Yea I know.

A: Let's go. There's a cow on our right and there's a cow on our left. We're threading the needle. The one on the left has horns im so scared. They're not moving but they're eyeing us. Oh god the one with the horns looked at me. Fuck. Alright we're about to get across the c—oh they're mooing! Ohh we're across the cattle guard we're safe. Oh. aaah.

N: We mainly stuck to back roads, passing through a small town every couple of days. We hardly saw anyone. When you're out biking for three weeks with only one other person, you go through conversation topics pretty quickly. Once you've run out of normal things to say, things can get kinda weird. //odd, strange

S: Everything ok over there?

A: Everything's fine just chew. Oh yeah look at him go...it's a Simon in the wild he's feeding!

S: So audio is like so easy to take out of context.

A: It's crazy he's, Simon jumped off of his bicycle ran into the woods came out with a deer he's just eating it's carcass he's scraping the bones.

S: Think this actually does sound like scraping a camping pot. I think there's a particular noise.

A: Better it than me. You know I've gotta share a tent with him. Glad he's well fed. Never get into a tent with an underfed simon. anyhow...

N: Simon and I fell into a pattern—our days moved in circles, one rolling into the next. wake up. eat some granola. pack up the bikes. ride all day. Pitch the tent by the side of the road. Eat. Go to sleep.

A: It's 6:30 we're in our tent. So Im not gonna say that we are absolute beasts of the open road, but we did do 65 miles today.

S: The traffic sounds like jet engines landing on top of us.

A: Yea as you can hear we are deep in the heart of the wilderness here. We're camped in a dry streambed next to route 180.

S: Well also this is like rush hour.

A: Yea i guess most folks also aren't going to bed at 6:30. But we are!

N: 40 miles a day, 50 miles a day 60 miles a day. Back roads, dirt roads, Interstate 10. Sunburned faces but each night your water bottle freezes solid. You'd be able to see your breath in the morning if only there were a little moisture in the air. The dry and barren landscape is an endless roll of film. Your mind wanders and the coyotes keep you up at night.

[coyotes]

N: One day bleeds into the next and it's all a blur of pedal strokes and empty pavement in some godforsaken desert.

A: Um we were scraping, scraping ice off our tent this morning. And i was scraping ice off my sleeping bag, which was really a pleasant way to get up in the morning.

A: Alright this is simon and ari coming to you from the continental divide of the united states of america.

A: ok bye bye truck!

A: so we're on the side of the road some ways out of Cascabel, and the sidewall of my tire just ripped open. I don't even know what, i don't even know what got it. But it is just like slashed open. Um...

A: And we are back to looking for a campsite...

A: This trip has been super important to me for a lot of reasons. One, it's such a break from the ordinary. It's such a useless endeavor. The whole point of it is to do it. It has no higher purpose.

[follow by something peaceful//tranquil]

A: Simon's hot on my tail, and he's overtaking me!

S: How would you feel about camping soon?

A: I'd feel good about camping soon. Yeah simon says that its four o'clock and his legs are turning into jelly. And that's no good. We don't even have any bread to spread it on. Oh fuck. This is a climb. We could camp there. Wanna go further?

S: no not really.

A: We are high up. The total elevation gain for this pass that we're going over is like 1500 ft from the valley floor that we just came from. And its cold. Its windy. And we're pretty high up and the sun's behind a cloud and out here, temperatures will really fuck with you out here because it'll be, the sun will be out and youll be roasting and your face will be burning, and then if the sun

you know when the sun sets, or if the sun goes behind a cloud, it drops. Temperature drops, very very quickly. Like a rock, one might say. And suddenly youre freezing. But your face is still burnt. Uhh im tired. Its been a long day. Either way, time to set up camp. Talk to you later.

[end somewhere else...maybe the end of a day]

A: We are high up. We have been climbing for the last i dunno many many hours. It's slow slow going its kind of meditative youre just in the easiest gear and all you can do is just sorta crank. You know there's a certain simplicity in biking up a steep hill for a long time with a heavy bike. You know you just go. You know you stop sort of judging your progress by mile markers but by cacti on the side of the road. Youre like ok passed that one. Passed the next one. Passed the next one. Just really one pedal stroke at a time.

N: I do my best thinking on my bicycle—for me it's almost meditative. And out there the landscape is so huge and motionless that you almost need to fill it with your thoughts. Otherwise, it's just too big.

Notes:

- context feels a bit cheesy
- make this story for me, whatever is important to me
- could be just going through a hard time
- how was i feeling about the relationship? Details perhaps
- what was meaningful to me here?
- end on a different note
- more sound design--let me take you on a ride
- you are the rider
- good parts are the little hiccups and difficulties
- be goofier
- finding another means of catharsis
- working through shit
- hear more about the silences, about being out and away from civilization
- Giving over to basic needs