



Riding with Rilke: Reflections on Motorcycles and Books

Ted Bishop

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A motorcycle odyssey that combines the sensory seduction of the road with the intellectual rewards of archival research. Ted Bishop took one last ride before the fall term. when he tried to pass a tractor trailer at 80 miles per hour, his motorcycle began to vibrate out of control. Bishop was flung into a ditch breaking his back in two places, shattering a wrist and an angle, and collapsing his lungs. When he came to in the hospital, his girlfriend, Hsing, told him, "You were dead in that ditch. You had no pulse when I found you." Left with time to write and reflect, Bishop produced this book, an account of the epic motorcycle trip he had completed just before the crash. Here Bishop takes readers from Edmonton to Austin, through the classic landscapes of the American West, and to a few America and Europe's most famous cities as he reconciles what it means to be both a road dog and researcher. From genuinely funny descriptions of how he came to own a Ducati, or a discussion of D.H. Lawrence's novels, Bishop smoothly transitions between the riding life and the writing life, drawing convincing connections between the two seemingly disparate pursuits. Whether describing the shock of holding Virginia Woolf's suicide note in the British Library or the outlaw thrill of cruising small American towns on his Ducati, Bishop meditates with wit and honesty on the tangled interplay of life, work and art.

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