



Not a Bad Ride: Stories from a Boomer's Life on the Edge

Eric J. Smith

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A boomer memoir delivered in wry vignettes—edgy but never bitter. These reflections concentrate on the early 1970s as I drifted through a turbulent swarm of events, buffeted by psychological conflicts, underachieving, drinking, and drugs. • Commune. I guess you could call it a commune: some of us were unrelated; we bought, cooked, and ate food as a group; we'd sit on the floor around a low table wolfing down fried rice, scrambled eggs, calf brains, and lungs. • The Draft. We all dealt with it one way or another. Some took cover in college throughout that period. Others enlisted for four years rather than serving the two-year minimum, sacrificing two years of their lives to gain control over how and where they spent their time during the war. • Hitchhiking. People seldom hitch these days. But in the late sixties and early seventies, we shuffled along the roads with our thumbs out, ready for anything. In the world of hitching, it was axiomatic never to offend the driver. Otherwise, you might find yourself back on the shoulder of the road, or worse. • Dropping Acid. I became concerned I'd have a bad trip so I went into the bathroom, locked the door, stared into the medicine cabinet mirror, and reassured myself—not aloud, but inside my head. I assessed the person I saw as if he and I were different entities. After several minutes, I felt better. • Health. You know that cliché, “If you have your health, you have everything”? In 1980, mine crashed like a runaway elevator. The room spun violently, faster and faster. I went blind; my body tied up in knots and started to disappear. This memoir takes you on the inside of the early seventies—life after that was up for grabs, shaped by one's youthful mistakes.

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