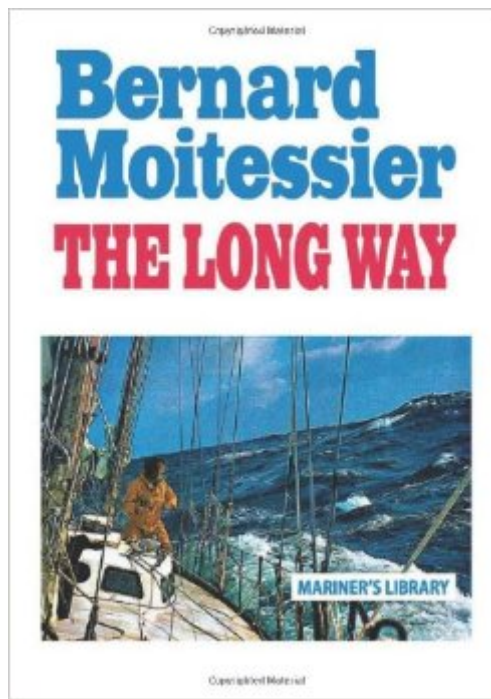


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The Long Way



Synopsis

The Long Way is Bernard Moitessier's own incredible story of his participation in the first Golden Globe Race, a solo, non-stop circumnavigation rounding the three great Capes of Good Hope, Leeuwin, and the Horn. For seven months, the veteran seafarer battled storms, doldrums, gear-failures, knock-downs, as well as overwhelming fatigue and loneliness. Then, nearing the finish, Moitessier pulled out of the race and sailed on for another three months before ending his 37,455-mile journey in Tahiti. Not once had he touched land.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

On my first reading, this book stirred my soul and shook me out of a decade of spiritual lethargy. On the second reading, I set about learning how to sail. On the third reading I bought my own 25' yacht. Now, many reads (and many months) later, and ready to begin my first solo passage, I am developing my own love affair with the sea. Thank you Bernard!

It's occasionally difficult to remember that Moitessier's memoir of the first Golden Globe singlehanded sail circumnavigation back in 1968 even concerns a race. From the outset, Moitessier enraptures himself and enraptures the reader in a tale of man alone finding his own inner compass. Virtually all prose-poem, THE LONG WAY skitters off the edge of the mundane into a realm of sometimes numinous interior dialogue, but it holds the reader's attention throughout. Moitessier entered the Round The World Race presumably to win, but he spends far more time communing with the seabirds and listening to the wave patterns on his boat, JOSHUA's hull than in dedicated

yacht racing. In the end, Moitessier decided not to sail back to his starting point, but went on to Tahiti on the next step of his inner voyage. THE LONG WAY is particularly interesting to read in juxtaposition with THE STRANGE LAST VOYAGE OF DONALD CROWHURST (Crowhurst went mad and simply stepped off his boat into the sea), and Robin Knox-Johnston's A WORLD OF MY OWN. Johnston prosaically suffered the miseries of a diet of canned bully beef, and a constant nervous but impeccably British Imperial xenophobic dread of how "The Frog" was doing. He wanted to be the winner, and was. It's clear that Moitessier could have cared less what Knox-Johnston or the others were doing. JOSHUA is his private garden, and he invites us in to sample its mysteries. His Zen-like approach is more understandable when one realizes that he was French in parentage but raised in Indochina. A calm, accepting Buddhist tone glows throughout this book. If indeed Moitessier went mad (as some say he did) his madness was a doorway to spiritual peace, and not, like Crowhurst's, to sorrow and death. Moitessier takes us THE LONG WAY toward beauty, value, and the validation of ourselves in what is, after all, a vast and playful universe.

I've been reading and re-reading this book for over 10 years now, and the main reason is because of the peace and tranquility it gives to me. Every time I open the book, I set sail on Joshua as a solo sailor and experience what the "gods" of the open sea give so freely. Bernard was truly a man who knew how to deal with the inner man and fully experience all of life around him one day at a time. There will never be another Bernard Moitessier

Some people come into contact with their subconscious mind and they rile against it, and we call them mad. Then other people have this encounter with the numinous and they surrender to the will of the world, to "the gods" as Moitessier called it. Moitessier is one of these later day mystics, who centuries ago would likely have become a monk or a poet, but in this barbarian age, he goes to sea. His earlier books are his best, and "The Long Way" is no disappointment. This book is as much about the internal struggles of Bernard Moitessier, as it is about his single handed sailing exploit around the world. Having circled the world, having passed the three great Southern capes, and while leading the first around the world sailing race Moitessier quits and heads for his friends in Tahiti. Moitessier had accomplished what he had set out to accomplish, and in the true anti-hero fashion of the day, he refused to become a bit player in some "Madison Avenue" nightmare featuring 15 minutes of fame that leaves one's life suffering of anti climax. He refused to allow the commercial world to steal this victory. "The Long Way" is a good read and I came away with a great respect for Bernard Moitessier. The translation from French to English by William Rodarmor is

exceptional. John Beasley

Mr. Boatner obviously missed the whole essence of Moitessier's rendering of his experience. This is not about literature, but about the real experience of a man whose mind wanders as his trip progresses. The style is in perfect harmony with what happens in Moitessier's mind, as the ocean gets to him and reality fades in the wake of his ship.

This is simply the best sailing book ever, and very dangerous for anyone who has a settled life, but wonders if there might not be more. Resist this, if you can: "My real log is written in the sea and sky; the sails talking with the rain and the stars amid the sounds of the sea, the silences full of secret things between my boat & me, like the times I spent as a child listening to the forest talk." It is also a story about a competitive man who had the prize in his hands (winning a non-stop, solo around the world race), thought about all the cameras, newsmen, Brigitte Bardot in attendance et al, and decided to just keep on sailing. Oh yes, and the book is chock-full of extremely good advice about blue-water sailing. I wish I had a below-decks steering station with a plexiglass dome to look through...

This was one of the most inspiring books I've ever read. After speaking to many people about what good "adventure" books they'd read, many people recommended this one. I was impressed... The author is very good at putting the reader on the deck of the boat and really getting the reader involved with the story. It's hard to imagine sailing around the world much less doing it alone. I forgot I was reading non-fiction at times. I couldn't put the book down and recommend it as required reading for anyone of you adventure seekers out there.

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