

# WRITINGS

## 'Solo' recalls youthful wanderings

"Solo. An American Dreamer in Europe: 1933-34"  
by Wright Morris  
Penguin Books  
191 pages



In 1933 23-year-old American author Wright Morris sailed across the Atlantic on an adventure-seeking year-long journey that took him to Austria, Italy and France.

Morris, who was then a curious upstart just out of college, did what every young hopeful writer yearns to do . . . he embarked on a search for experience and understanding — to absorb and investigate.

He traveled alone, without tour guides or sweethearts, with money he had saved from a few summer odd jobs. He didn't cart along a strict itinerary, but instead chose to live in and learn about a few select areas.

Now after 50 years and undoubtedly a great deal of retrospection, Morris has bestowed upon us a gem of remembrance. His recent book "Solo," polished and uncluttered, is a delectable account of those twelve or so months. Like real

maple syrup or feather pillows, "Solo" is a small, simple delight, ideal reading for evenings by the fire, after Algebra.

Morris, whose "Plains Song" won the American Book Award for Fiction in 1981, is a master of detailed prose and acute observation. A seasoned author, he is gifted with the art of employing irony and wit to engage and entertain.

Morris remembers, as he set out on his trip that he "was not without experience, of an artless sort . . ." He goes on: "As the author of 'The Sun/Sweat through the fog' I was not without a show of style and substance."

After an autumn in Vienna; a winter with the eccentric Deleglise family at Schloss Renna, a ramshackle castle on the Danube; spring bicycling with a fraternity brother in Italy; and a lonely summer in Paris, Morris had indeed grown, discovered and realized . . . probably more than his wildest notions had deemed possible.

Morris uses the term "Wandervogel" (umlaut over the "o") to describe the sometimes romantic, always young-at-heart wanderers, like himself, roving the Old World. His book, working like a magnet, brings out the Wandervogel in all of us.

Kim Carlson

## ... 'We begin bombing in five minutes'

"The Little Black Book of Atomic War"  
by Marc Ian Barasch  
Dell Trade Paperback  
107 pages

Just when you thought it was safe to come out of the bomb shelter, onto the market arrives yet another atomic war book. But, unlike other end-of-the-world publications, this book answers questions to everything you always wanted to know about Armageddon but were afraid to ask (or your government forgot to tell you).

Compiled from official U.S. sources, Barasch gives the inside track on all that has passed for official wisdom in the nuclear age. The book is structured around events, accidents and official statements by people in the know — J. Robert Op-

penheimer, Albert Einstein, Harry S. Truman, Alexander Haig and Ronald Reagan; all of which lend insight to "How We Learned To Stop Worrying And Love The Bomb."

Along with an off-beat history lesson, readers can find out lots of things that they really should know. Did you realize that the Manhattan Project whiz kids also invented atomic golfballs? Or that the Greggs family of Mars Bluff, South Carolina, found an A-bomb in their backyard?

In chapter four, "Taking In The Sites: A Tourist's Guide To Nuclear America," one can also learn about the National Atomic Museum in Albuquerque, New Mexico. A big treat for the kids is the mock up of a Minuteman capsule.

Although the documents, events and statements are quite serious, Barasch puts everything in a humorous context. "The Little Black Book of Atomic War" may not do much for your peace of mind, but it will send you off to the apocalypse with a knowing smile.

Mike Duncan

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