

SEARCHING FOR THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

By Walkin' Jim Stoltz

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I --
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

--- Robert Frost

from "The Road Not Taken"

Prologue

I don't recall when or where the idea for this book first started, I suppose it was somewhere in the back of my mind before I even began my walk. Whenever I met someone along the way, the suggestion always seemed to come up.

"You ought to write a book."

"Yeah, maybe I will."

Many months have passed since I finished my trip, and the thought of turning miles to words has become a reality. But the trip itself has become more of a venture into dreamlike paradise. The wide open spaces, the mountains, the vast stretches of unbroken wilderness, all seem very far away, belonging to an entirely different age and life.

A fever possesses me. Some folks call it the wanderlust. It's that and more. I've walked the less traveled path, the long, hard way which is reward itself, and I must go again. I must quench the thirst driving me to take to the trail of letters and journals, maps and memories, and so return to search out the road not taken. I must write.

I've called myself folk-singer, walker, student, tree-planter, poet, and janitor. Now I take on "author." It feels good. It's like crowning myself king for a day. I can say anything I want, in any way I want.

I can go off
in this direction up
or
in this one.

But I'll try to keep sane. I promise.

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I guess it's a fault of many first-time writers like myself, to want to write the "total" story. When I first began this project, my intentions were to write more than just a chronicle of my own journey. I was going to delve much deeper into the historical aspects, but I found I was no historian. I was going to explore the life habits of many of the animals I observed, but found I wasn't a zoologist. But I am a walker, and that is what I've stuck to, touching briefly on the other subjects when they relate to The Walk. I've found the "chronicle of my own journey" is story enough for me to tell, and I've attempted to give a clear picture of my experiences for all you aspiring hikers. Well, I guess we might as well get to it. Let's talk about walkin'.