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In 1965, 16-year-old Robin Lee Graham began a solo around-the-world voyage from San Pedro, California, in a 24-foot sloop. Five years and 33,000 miles later, he returned to home port with a wife and daughter and enough extraordinary experiences to fill this bestselling book, *Dove*.

Dove Details

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From Reader Review Dove for online ebook

Denzil Pugh says

If Thoreau had lived during the 20th century, filled with materialism and media, I doubt he would have lived near Walden for any appreciable amount of time before going crazy, or having some developer come and tear down all the trees. In these days, he would have had to migrate north to Canada, or become next door neighbors with the militia groups in Montana.

Robin Lee Graham, in 1965, decided to sail around the world, in a sailboat, with little money, and with the rebellious attitude that prevailed in these times. And Dove, the name of the ship, is the book about those adventures. I picked this book up long ago, seeing in it some Thoreau-esque themes in it, a Romantic look at the world aboard a boat. I bought it several years ago, but only read it recently.

The metaphor for life running throughout the book is obvious. It's a great book for giving to graduates, who should be tired of Dr. Seuss by now. The book also makes a great argument against the current education system in America (which would also have made Thoreau nauseated). As a teacher, I found several students with great intelligence, but only in the Tactile areas. They had to have motion, do things with their hands. They were great artists, and will become mechanics or some such. But the school system has failed them, requiring them only to sit, read, write, and regurgitate material ad infinitum. To sail around the world, to experience the life of a traveler, the depths of loneliness, the joys of gratitude and the simplistic things of life. It would be the most idyllic existence, and no one could ask for anything else. Students should be interacting with their world, not programmed by books and teachers with facts and figures.

The one thing that Graham talks about most of all, and what I found most enduring, was the feelings of loneliness, especially after finding the love of his life. It mirrors the depths of a hollow heart, after a love has gone. Simple writing style, honest, pure. It seemed only at the end, when trying to convince us all of the harm we are doing to the environment does the writing get complex, and more tedious. I wonder if the co-writer didn't do more of that part. There is a follow up book, Home is the Sailor, which was made, but I've never seen it myself. But I'm sure it's available online.

Brent says

boy drops out of school. boy buys boat. boy sails around the world. for a long time. why wasn't I this boy?

Melinda says

I got interested in this book because Zac Sunderland mentions it in his blog. See Zac's blog at <http://www.zacsunderland.com/blog/ind...> . Zac is currently about 10 days from finishing a 13 month solo cruise around the world in a sail boat called "Intrepid", which will make him the youngest person to circumnavigate the globe solo! The story of Robin Lee Graham inspired him to think about doing the same

thing himself.

More to come as I start the book.....

I have finished this book, and as of July 16, 2009 Zac Sunderland completed his circumnavigation of the world, and now has the record as the youngest person to ever do so. He began when he was 16, and finished when he was 17. Yea Zac!

Now on to the book. I have to admit that I did not like Robin Lee very much. (his parents call him Lee, his wife calls him Robin in the book) I appreciate that school is not a "one size fits all" system, and I am thankful that he found a way to learn outside of that limiting box. I also appreciate that young men often need challenge and to be pushed to find their manhood. This is a hard thing to do with the system of "one size fits all" for school and for work. So I appreciate and am thankful for Robin rising to the challenge to "do hard things" (as Zac Sunderland puts it) and actually work towards the solo sailing goal he finds to take on.

What is missing in this book is thankfulness and gratefulness. Robin would never have thought of the solo sailing goal he had, if his father had not taken his family on a multi-month cruise on "The Golden Hind". His father supported Robin in this daring adventure, yet his father gets very little positive press. Robin never would have finished his solo cruise without his wife Patti, whom he met in Fiji. He and Patti later married in South Africa, mid-way through his trip around the globe. And while Robin does thank Patti for helping urge him on to finish, the overall feel you get from reading even that "thank you" from him is a rather selfish and resentful attitude.

Angry at being told he was too young to marry, he resolves to earn his own money the rest of the way on his trip. You are not ever told whether he stuck to that promise or not. Being angry at the world, being angry that other people don't see things to be as important as what he does, striking back against commercialism, and embracing the mythical simpler native way of life all seems very shallow to me. Angry at over hunting of turtles, Robin and his wife (and friends) hunt goats on the Gallapagos Islands. What is different between what sea captains did years before with the turtles, and what Robin is doing now? He seems to love the simpler native way of life that he sees in the Pacific Islands, yet he never stays there long enough to figure out why the people are poor, or if their life really is as simple as he thinks it is. Angry at commercial production and capitalism, he seems to take for granted that his boat was made by someone in business to build boats and that the canned food he stocks up on was also made by a commercial business. Wow... and he doesn't even seem to see the contradiction in his own life and words!

I hope this young man grew up to be a grateful grown man. I hope that at some point he was thankful for his father and the sacrifice it took for him to let him sail around the world alone. I hope that he developed a kinder attitude towards others who stayed home and did the hard work of going to work and building boats that were safe and of canning food that remains safe for months. I hope that he learned that arrogance is rarely attractive, and that what really is hard in life may not be sailing around the world solo... but living with people and building relationships that grow and blossom over time.

I hear that he's written another book about the years after his solo voyage. I'm trying to figure out if it would be worth it to read.... or perhaps to pass. There are many books by angry people and by arrogant people. Perhaps I'll try his next book, hoping to read words that come from a thankful heart instead of an angry one.

Patricia Ventola says

I read it when I was a teen. I'd rather read it again, but at that time I felt like it was a fantastic book, a great and awesome history.

Suzy says

This is more than an adventure, it's a journey into independence and self discovery. I read this book on the average of every two years, especially when I need a pick me up from the everyday mundane. I highly recommend it for ages early teen to adult.

The Coconuts Thompson González says

THE book that planted the seed in my mind to one day live aboard a sailboat and travel around the world.

Kami says

I picked this up at the school library after reading a much better book, *Adrift: 76 Days Lost at Sea* by Steven Callahan, which made me interested in sailing. I lost interest again after reading this book. To give it some credit, it was a pretty fascinating story. However, the kid was kind of annoying I thought. He also went all hippie and preachy at the end and that's where I was completely turned off.

Lahni says

This book did make me wish I knew how to sail a boat so I could sail to wonderful exotic islands. But that would require living much closer to an ocean. The book had a few problems. I don't speak "sailing" so it would have been helpful if there was a glossary of nautical/sailing terms. Also, there was very little mention of Robin's mother. She wasn't very supportive of the trip at first did she change her mind? The father flew out to ports to see him but not the mother. If I set my child off to sail around the world I would have been at every port stop I was able to get to. Finally, I didn't care much for the tone at the end of the book. So while I liked the adventure of the journey, I wish the book had been better written. 2 1/2 stars.

Michael Petrie says

At the tender age of 16, Robin Lee Graham set out on a 33,000 mile, five year circumnavigation as the youngest solo sailor in the smallest boat: a 24 foot sloop named *Dove*. His voyage was famously covered by National Geographic Magazine, spawned two best selling books – *Dove* and *Home Is The Sailor* – as well as a children's book, *The Boy Who Sailed Around The World Alone*, and a 1974 major Hollywood movie, *The Dove*, which won a Golden Globe Award. The story is more than one of adventure, it is also an amazing love

story. Young Graham was not looking to find the love of his life when he set out on his voyage, but that's exactly what he found. On a beautiful tropical South Sea island he met the woman of his dreams ... and it changed everything!

Admittedly, Dove may not be the greatest piece of literature ever penned, but this book chronicling young Graham's voyage is an exciting adventure/coming-of-age/love story and greatly influenced an awful lot of readers, including me. It introduced me to a whole new world of exploration and inspired my own voyages in sailing boats across the Pacific to tropical islands. I first read this book way back around 1977 and have re-read it so many times over the years since that the pages are frayed.

For anyone wanting an update on whatever became of Robin Lee Graham all these years later, I wrote an article about him in 2010 for SAIL Magazine. You can read it online at:
<http://www.calwriter.net/index.php?op...>

KC says

This was a real fun book and when reading it you seem to go on the adventure with him but at the same time conjure up your own dreams, hopes, desires too. I came upon it because my Dad had always talked about it and how it was a big inspiration for him as a youth. Robin Graham is very passionate, and it's really refreshing to go through great doubts, joys, and formative moments with him. He also has a way of putting feelings that are sometimes hard to describe into simple but powerful words. He began the voyage in 1965 and from a historical perspective it's interesting to see how he comments on certain social topics and the terms he uses; for example, civilized societies vs. uncivilized societies, Christianity, and there are short comments pertaining to Communism too.

Mike says

One of the best personal adventure stories ever written. A more innocent world back then.

Steve Bennett says

Of the many bad books I was forced to read during high school, this was the worst. Absolutely hated it.

Betsey says

Another favorite I read every few years! great adventure, thoughts of being a teenager and ideas about growing up, with a love story mixed in. A must read!

Yak says

I read this when I was sailing with my family and not really enjoying it due to seasickness, but liking the mechanics of sailing and the idea of sailing to faraway places. "Dove" fits the bill, being a first-person account of a 16-year-old who sailed alone around the world. Plus it has that element of extreme personal challenge.

Suzanne says

I will date myself and say I had a huge crush on this guy as a young girl with a birthday subscription to National Geographic. (He contributed articles for years during his voyage) What adolescent (and I wasn't quite there) doesn't fantasize about quitting school and finding himself by sailing around the world? When my children grew to his age I thought his family must have been just crazy to let him go, especially in a small 24 foot boat.

This was my first introduction to sailing, celestial navigation and sextants, an art perhaps lost with the advent of GPS and onboard computer navigation. This preceded the social revolution of the 60's (he set sail in '65 I think) but sure forecast the culture of rejection, mind expansion and the need to "drop out" for awhile. I expect there have been major changes in the ports he visited 40+ year ago. He was one gutsy kid.

Lobeck says

This is the true story of the author's solo sailing trip around the world. Robin Lee Graham, featured several times in National Geographic, set out to sail the world when he was 16 and finally returned home when he was 21. This book is his personal narrative of his travels - from being bored and lonely at sea to exploring gorgeous tropical islands to meeting his love Patty. It's a great book if you like to travel through literature.

Lauran Lansdon says

It's interesting reading this book as a teenage girl (when it was first published) and then again as a middle-aged woman. The romantic notion of sailing around the world alone, with only cats for company, stuck with me over the years. I often refer to this book even now. Even though I was not a boater, for many years after (that first read) I had a dream of sailing around the world.

I read the book this time as a wiser woman and a more discerning reader. what I saw was all the hard work that went into this trip, the almost crippling loneliness, the quality of the writing/storytelling, the courage of the young woman who became his wife who was also traveling the world alone. This book may be the impetus for my strong desire to travel and to travel while I was young (rather than wait until I was retired) and to know that it's possible as a woman to do so. I have traveled extensively for work and pleasure, by myself and with groups. I married someone who loves to travel and who also loves boats. So while I've not sailed around the world (I much prefer the comfort of a hotel), I have lived a modified version of that dream.

Any book that influences/inspires you is worth reading.

Kevin Deaton says

One of my favorite books. An example of what you can do with your life once you stop all that God Damn THINKING and believe in yourself. It proves your dreams are only limited by your will.

Shawn says

An amazing feat - sailing single-hand around the world - but this guy rubbed me all wrong. Most galling was a long passage where he rails against the destruction of the ocean environment by modern society and then tosses an empty Coke bottle over the side of the boat.

Emily says

The ** rating does not mean that I think this book was terrible. It simply means that this was not my cup of tea (to quote the book). I would not have chosen this novel on my own, so the reason for me reading it was because of one of many summer reading projects that have been gleefully assigned as mandatory torture material by my future LA teacher. Yippee.

Please, if stories about ships and sailing or autobiographies about a person taking a five year long solo boat trip to circumnavigate the globe to fulfill his lifelong dream appeal to you, do not hesitate to read this book. I, however, being a fiction/fantasy reader, was yawning through the entire book. Thank the heavens for the little bit of romance throughout the plot or I would be forced to abandon ship and take the F (which I honestly considered doing. I mean, seriously, read an autobiography about ships--of which you know nothing about--or the final book in a magic-filled series bursting with assassins and intrigue? duh.). Good luck fellow freshmen scholars!
