



Frost on my Moustache: The Arctic Exploits of a Lord and a Loafer

Tim Moore

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Guided by the fastidious journals of an eminent Victorian adventurer by the name of Lord Dufferin, Tim Moore sets off to prove his mettle in the most stunningly inhospitable place on Earth-the Arctic. Armed only with his searing wit, wicked humor, and seasickness pills, our pale suburbanite-wracked by second thoughts of tactical retreat-confronts mind-numbing cold, blood-thirsty polar bears, a convoy of born-again Vikings, and, perhaps most chilling of all, herring porridge. When he is not humiliating himself through displays of ignorance and incompetence, Moore casts a sharp eye on the local flora and fauna, immersing readers in the splendors and wonders of this treacherously beautiful region.

A deliciously and inexhaustibly funny book, *Frost on My Moustache* deserves to be placed alongside those by Evelyn Waugh, Eric Newby, and Bill Bryson.

Frost on my Moustache: The Arctic Exploits of a Lord and a Loafer Details

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From Reader Review Frost on my Moustache: The Arctic Exploits of a Lord and a Loafer for online ebook

Nathan Albright says

Having read a large number of books by the author [1], I can say that this follows the usual pattern. I happen to like this pattern, and there is a sense of comfort in knowing that the author will have some sort of harebrained idea, do a whirlwind tour of research, and then attempt to live on the cheap while engaged in some dramatic and historically important journey wherein he makes himself look like an idiot while simultaneously wrestling with issues of seriousness in a lighthearted fashion that many readers are likely to miss. This book reads like one of the early adventures of a familiar friend. I'm not sure if the author would be a friend in person, but it seems as if much of the author's obnoxiousness and cluelessness is an act.

Having read five travel books from the author that have the same story arc and approach, it is clear that the author found an approach that gave him popularity and success as a writer and freed him from the need to send nasty postcards and dream of revenge fantasies against Telefax, a company that appears to have dismissed him before this volume came out, and once a writer finds an approach that works in terms of critical and popular success there is usually little need to reinvent the wheel afterwards.

In this travelogue, we begin with an extensive look at a Lord Dufferin who was a British viceroy of Canada and India and also made a youthful trip to the Arctic with a melancholy manservant named Wilson who the author strongly identifies with. After embarrassing himself while doing research on the life and times of Lord Dufferin, the author travels as closely as he can to the path that Lord took--one presumes that the author is the titular loafer first to Iceland, then to the Faroe and Shetland Islands, and finally to Norway, Jan Mayen, and Svalbard. In reading this book, I realize I may be among the very few people that wishes they could do what this author did in terms of visiting the remote lands of the Arctic north, although I can't imagine I would necessarily want to stay long there. The author's comments are, as usual, humorous and on-point, and he demonstrates his commitment to traveling on the cheap, pretending not to be very adventurous, and having awkward cultural experiences with foreigners, which must be a British thing.

Although there was much to enjoy in this book, there was something about it that really bothered me. I will freely own that I was bothered by the first part of the book, which was especially cringy, largely because I am an American and find the extreme class-consciousness of the book's opening to be difficult to take. The author's obsequious fawning over the quirks and eccentricities of the English hoity-toity people that he encounters was quite against the grain for this somewhat more self-assertive American. It is one thing to be humiliated by seasickness or by struggles in rugged climates with people whose language(s) you do not understand, or getting lost and trying to do too much traveling too cheaply--all of that I can readily understand. It is another thing entirely to feel as if one has to humiliate oneself because one is dealing with inbred elites and has to demonstrate to everyone a willingness to accept humiliation due to social status.

That part of the book really bothered me, and made me look forward to the author dealing with the awkwardness of cultural experiences with foreigners rather than with those who think themselves of a higher class.

[1] See, for example:

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2017...>

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2017...>

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2017...>

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2017...>

Liz says

I'll admit that I almost gave up on Tim Moore after reading *The Grand Tour* and not really enjoying it very much. However, I had already purchased this book, and so I felt obligated to at least give it a chance. I'm so glad I did! This is the tale of the author's attempt to follow in the footsteps of the indomitable British adventurer Lord Dufferin, who in the nineteenth century journeyed into the Arctic on a wooden yacht, and then wrote a wildly popular (at the time) book about it. While the author loosely holds to the spirit of Dufferin's journey, he makes use of more modern means of transportation. Instead of a wooden boat he sails on freighters and fishing boats, and when he recreates Dufferin's journey across the heart of Iceland, he does so on a bicycle instead of on horseback. After Iceland, he journeys to Norway and Spitsbergen, as did his predecessor. As usual, misfortune and woe seem to follow him wherever he goes. He relates the tales of his misadventures with a sarcastic, self-deprecating humor that I usually found very funny, though several times I felt like the author was digressing way too much into whining and self pity. Nonetheless, many parts of this book made me laugh out loud, and there were several passages I felt prompted to read aloud to whoever would listen (primarily my husband, who shows infinite patience in these matters). Reading this restored my opinion of this author, and I might actually be tempted to read another of his books. I would recommend this book to those who enjoy travel writers like Bill Bryson. While Bill Bryson is definitely a better all-around writer, in my opinion, people who enjoy that type of thing would probably like this.

Coffeeboss says

This is one of the funniest travel essay books I've ever read. Tim Moore decides to follow the path of a not-so-famous British explorer from the 1850s named Lord Dufferin. Moore follows the route on boat, bike, and plane, taking him through the northern climes of Iceland, Norway, and Spitzbergen. Moore is a decidedly wimpy traveler, which makes his tale all the more hilarious. Let's just say there is much humiliation and sea-sickness vomiting to be had. I laughed out loud many times while reading this, and would recommend it to people who enjoy self-deprecating writers like David Sedaris and to anyone who enjoys travel memoirs.

Susan says

Laugh out loud funny. No, I really mean it. Tim Moore is a British journalist who decides to re-enact Lord Dufferin's voyage to the arctic. What? You don't know who Lord Dufferin is? It doesn't matter, you'll learn.

Here is one passage where Moore describes his feelings on attempting to secure passage on a Viking ship to cross the North Sea: "The whole endeavour was plainly both overambitious and disasterously inept. Of all the adjectives I could apply to boats in which I would not want to cross the North Sea, 'small' and 'Viking' would come in the top five, just behind 'ablaze' and 'upside down'."

I took this book with me while backpacking and camping on Isle Royale, and it couldn't have been a better choice.

James says

Have I mentioned I'm in love? It's just a literary love affair, but those can be as satisfying and less messy than the real thing. Tim Moore is the object of my affection. The witty, wordy-wise travel writer can do no wrong in my book. Or in his.

In his first adventure, Moore follows the footsteps of a Victorian lord. It's a journey that takes him across Iceland and up to the Arctic, giving him ample scope to show off his talents for nautical incompetence and sensational seasickness, not to mention his wonderful wordplay.

During the long sea journey from Iceland to Norway, he's called upon to tell a joke to his Scandinavian crew-mates. Unfortunately, this is the joke:

"An Eskimo calls out a repair man to check his car. The mechanic checks under the bonnet and then offers a diagnosis: 'Looks like you've blown a seal, mate.'

'No', says the driver, nervously fingering his upper lip, 'it's just frost on my moustache.'"

Ok, not the funniest joke in the world, but the blank looks on the faces of his crew can mean only one thing:

"I would now be required to explain in detail an obscure act of bestiality and its graphic aftermath. These were people I had known for less than thirty-six hours. The closest I'd come to establishing a rapport was to be sick on one of them. I think someone might have laughed, but it could just as easily have been the sound of my soul trying to eat itself."

Thoroughly entertaining, brimming over with mirth, to say nothing of the startling revelations about the toilet habits of Icelanders. You can surely understand why I'm smitten?

Matt says

Tim complains about the North Atlantic was apparently not available for a title.

Vikas Datta says

Superbly funny.... brings an old Victorian nobleman and his exploits to life and replicates them in the modern era but with more disastrous consequences.. and of course, Lord Dufferin's valet Wilson was a Marvin the Paranoid Android of his time...

Norah says

I started this and found it fascinating as I live near the Clandeboye area referred to, but got a bit bogged down in it. Thought I'd get back to it eventually but now I find I have bookcrossed it to someone else so will have to get another copy!

Reread this as I was visiting Iceland with my daughter and granddaughter (Aurora! get it?) this year, and thought it would be a suitable preparation. This first half of the book follows his travels there, then he moves on to Scandinavia. I found his style somewhat rambling, so tended to skip bits. Finished it now to hand on to a friend going to Iceland in September, and another the owner of an Iceland specialist holiday company.

Klara says

I must admit, I didn't know Lord Dufferin or Svalbard existed until I read this book. Therein, though, lies the beauty of the book. Moore's account of his adventures presents an intellectual journey as well as a rousing travelogue: the likable, relatable narrator successfully grabs and holds readers' interest as he researches Lord Dufferin just as well as when he ventures abroad. The author relates his exploits with an appealing mix of humility and humor reminiscent of Bill Bryson; I sympathized with Moore's embarrassment in numerous situations, but also laughed out loud. The tale holds educational value as well, providing previously unenlightened readers such as myself with interesting information on new people and places in a highly entertaining manner. Sweeping readers away on a madcap jaunt from high society to the high seas and beyond, Moore's story is an absolute joy. This ought to be essential reading for the enthusiastic armchair traveler!

Jim says

This is a book that made me laugh and cry. I cried because the hardbound edition I owned had glued signatures that apparently used reject adhesive from Russian Post-It notes and dissolved as I turned the pages. It wouldn't have mattered if I hated the book, because I could then hurl it at the wall and watch it explode like a pressure-cooker bomb. But I loved the book, and found in Tim Moore a kindred spirit who could send me into gales of guffaws.

Frost on my Moustache: The Arctic Exploits of a Lord and a Loafer is one of those "let's go back and see what it's like to re-visit places covered in a classic travel book of, oh, say, a hundred and fifty years ago" books. The book that Moore revisited was Lord Dufferin's **Letters from High Latitudes**, about a cruise in 1856 that took in the Northeastern Arctic islands of Iceland, the Faeroes, the Shetlands, Jan Mayen, and finally Spitzbergen. Dufferin's book, which I have read and liked, is a genuine travel classic, and **Frost on My Moustache** is one too, but in a more humorous vein.

Beginning with a great description of what it's like to be seasick on an Icelandic container ship, the book hits notes of poetry:

'Yes, we must show you how to wear the survivor suits,' said the captain, as I squinted stupidly

at the safety poster, a comment I made the terrible error of thinking was a joke. As it transpired, I didn't even see a lifejacket, and even in my darkest hours I was too embarrassed to ask again about the survival suits. Shouting, 'No, no! Come back! Please show me how to live!' as the captain whistled away down the corridor wouldn't have sounded great, and it might easily have cursed the voyage in line with some 'Scottish-play'=type nautical superstition. All I could do was to try and recall from my Bronze Survival Medal course (failed) how you go about making a float by inflating a pair of pyjama bottoms. 'Excuse me, could you blow into my trousers to make them swell up?' was not a question I wanted to ask a sailor.

The author was a glutton for punishment. No sooner does he embark in Reykyavik than he goes on a bicycle ride through the dread Kjolur route, some 250 kilometers of uninhabited desolation that marks the center of Iceland. (Some 95% of the population of the island live within hailing distance of the coast.)

Then he takes several more gut-wrenching seasickness-inducing cruises to the Faeroes, the Shetlands, and Spitzbergen. Only the leg to Jan Mayen was by air, and the weather there was too windy to permit a safe landing by the Norwegian Hercules cargo aircraft.

I suppose it remains for me to find a copy of the book that won't fall apart as I turn the pages. Sigh!

catherine says

moore retraces the path of a 19th century english lord's (mostly) sailing tour through parts of scandinavia. the journey itself sounded interesting (as does dufferin's original text), but i was disappointed in the writing. definitely a british humor, and not a travelogue. and it's *very* british, which i don't have much of a taste for. moore's a decent craftsman, but i just don't enjoy his tone. dufferin went on to become some early canadian statesman, which was a fun fact for me, as "dufferin" is a main road near my old neighborhood in toronto.

Alonzo says

I first attempted to read the paperback, but couldn't get into it...

Then, I found the audio-book; listening sometimes helps with inflections, pauses, etc. which a reader may miss in print. The audio-book is narrated by Richard Greenwood and is hilarious. I laughed aloud in the middle of the night while listening to the uproarious things this guy did; I literally had tears in my eyes and nearly lost my breath laughing so hard. My wife thought I was having some kind of attack!

If you need a good laugh, you could do worse; you'd be hard-pressed to do better, in my humble opinion.

I'll tell you what: I'll read it again sometime in the next few months and I'll write a better review.

Jennifer Delamere says

I picked this up because 1)I am considering a trip to Iceland, and 2)the author follows the itinerary of Lord Dufferin, who made the trip during the mid-Victorian era, a time-frame I'm so interested in because I've set

my own books during that time.

The book was very funny and I loved his descriptions. The only thing I found slightly off-putting was that he acted in every way like a single man/slacker, including many irresponsibly dangerous adventures, even though he had a wife and two small children back in England (which he mentions a few times in the book). I found that hard to reconcile at times. Also, he comes across as such a misanthrope! I do hope he played it up for the sake of humor.

I listened to this on audiobook, which really added to the fun. The narrator was excellent, especially the way he did the voices for Lord Dufferin (bombastic Victorian lord/explorer) and his valet, Wilson (grumpy, put-upon servant).

All in all, a fun read. I found the book that started it all, Dufferin's out-of-print "Letters from High Latitudes," on Google books. I look forward to reading that as well.

Lindsey says

Tim Moore's self-deprecating Arctic travels. Funny enough in a 30-something, boyish kind of way, but not 280 pages funny. More like two columns in a magazine funny.

Brian says

Vomit - Verb, to disgorge see also: Spew, Ruminant, sick, chunder, hurl, throw up.

There's a lot of ways to say the same thing, and if you are constantly seasick travel author Tim Moore, even more ways to experience it! In keeping with the travel theme of the summer reading program I decided to reach deep into the catalog for a title by one of my favorite, albeit, not well known in the states, writers. What do you get if you mixed Bill Bryson with the cast of Monty Python and left the resulting issue to be raised by Terry Pratchett? You would probably get a Tim Moore. Moore is the slacker voice of my generation. Just as in his books "French Revolutions" and "Travels with my Donkey", Moore's travels and travails are loosely based around a theme. In this case it's a Victorian travelogue written by one time Viceroy of Canada and India, Lord Dufferin. Dufferin's travels to Iceland and parts of Norway produced a minor literary sensation in their day. Taking his cue from Dufferin, Moore attempts to follow the same trail, but runs afoul of over the counter medication, Viking re-enactors, his own putzy-ness, and a Scandinavian sense of humor that finds the punch-line to the one joke Moore knows, confusing. Moore might not be for everyone, but if you want a good entertaining read, have deliciously juvenile sense of humor, and enjoy reading about locales that are, unique if not exotic, then give all of Moore's books a try.
