



You Can't Get There from Here: A Year on the Fringes of a Shrinking World

Gayle Forman

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Globalization is really about people, about what happens when your culture shows up in my living room or when my way of life is tossed into your lap. It's the Somali restaurant in downtown Minneapolis. . . . It is challenging identities, creating new art forms, igniting new obsessions, and uniting long-lost families. Creation, destruction, reinvention. Things are getting very interesting.-from the Introduction.

For journalist Gayle Forman, the world is a strange and wonderful place. So when her husband suggested an extended round-the-globe adventure, she agreed as long as they stayed way off the beaten path. Forman, who had always considered herself an outsider, hoped to discover an affinity with those living on the margins in some of the most exotic spots on earth.

But a funny thing happened on her way to the fringe. She started to notice that the tentacles of globalization were changing everything, not only for people in the mainstream but for those on the edges, too. In *You Can't Get There from Here*, Forman invites us on a whirlwind ride to the mountain hideaways of Kazakhstan's Tolkien fanatics and inside the townships of South Africa's lost tribe of Israel. She introduces us to a wild assortment of characters: lovelorn Tongan transvestites, charismatic Tanzanian rap stars, precocious Cambodian street kids, out-of-work Dutch prostitutes. In the artful interplay of these eight lively, thoughtful, interwoven stories, she reveals how all of these diverse lives-as well as our own-are being inextricably altered by the ever-shrinking world that we all share. Because, she writes, "To forget the humanity in others is to risk forgetting one's own."

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