

# Neil Peart's *Far and Away: A Prize Every Time*

By Richard J. Atkins #93162

**IN THE DEDICATION OF HIS NEW BOOK,** *Far and Away: A Prize Every Time* (ECW Press, 2011), Neil Peart may be riffing on *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas* when he states that his daughter makes his heart “three sizes bigger.” Peart has pulled together a collection of 22 stories, written over the last three years, and assembled them in one volume, a superb coffee-table reader. Almost any read from the compilation can be taken its starting point (necessary data, germane to the story and usually contained in previous writings are referenced), providing an excellent insight into the sights, sounds, sensations, thoughts and feelings experienced by the author as he rides the greatest roads of the United States and beyond.

With a gorgeous cover shot taken by Greg Russell of Tandem Digital, the art depicts Peart, riding on a paved road—Westgard pass, going from Nevada through the Sierras into California—in the middle of vast acreage of natural beauty. It's a great reminder to all who ride (and travel) exactly where we stand in comparison to our earthly surroundings.

If you're a frequent visitor to Peart's site ([www.neilpeart.net](http://www.neilpeart.net)), you already know about “News, Weather, and Sports: Tales From the Trails,” the vehicle through which “Bubba” transmits a wealth of information about roadcraft, traveling skillfully and considerately by motorcycle. Yet there's so much more to digest: ideas on traveling, drumming, love, and respect.



Neil Peart's stories are “open letter and meditation” to friends and fans alike. Motorcyclists, in particular, will be drawn to his discussions of one of his best riding techniques, Shunpiking. The term arises from, and is used to describe “riders who deliberately avoid all major roads.” The descriptions of these rides (check out the ordeals of riding in Puerto Rico) and supporting photos deliver a story worth telling and retelling.

Something eminently compelling about Peart's writing is the background, the history, he gives in discussing the sights and experiences. Whether it's a visit to Los Alamos (inspiration for Rush's song, “The Manhattan Project”) or even a trip to Death Valley, the focus is always on roadcraft and safety advice, equipment, and accessories (yet there's so much more).

In these intimate stories, Peart invites the reader into his world. Through his lens, readers share in the Joy of Life (“The Ballad of Larry and Suzy” introduces the birth of his now two-year old, Olivia), as well as the success of a job well done (the story of recording *The Hockey Theme* for the NHL in “Fire and Ice”). Balancing Bubba's menu, the author expounds on frustrations of life, as he and a friend discover the source of a new distracting red light, now visible in his Canadian home's bedroom—“The Quest For the Phantom Tower.” Moments serious and hilarious are juxtaposed: navigating through the challenges of being without a tour bus after its untimely breakdown and prolonged repair, versus sharing fun with a

dear friend, Brutus, as the two trek through countries in South America, under the close (better stated as “nervous”) supervision of security director and erstwhile riding partner, Michael Mosbach.

The real Prize of the missive is stated clearly in the Outro as *The Meaning of Life: Love and Respect*. By taking in the stories and unpacking the underlying messages, Peart remains consistent throughout—that as riders and human beings, we are here to earn love and respect from others, particularly those close to us.

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<http://www.ecwpress.com>  
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