



No Fixed Address (Short Black)

Robyn Davidson

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In every religion I can think of, there exists some variation on the theme of abandoning the settled life and walking one's way to godliness. The Hindu Sadhu, leaving behind family and wealth to live as a beggar; the pilgrims of Compostela walking away their sins; the circumambulators of the Buddhist kora; the Hajj. What could this ritual journeying be but symbolic, idealised versions of the foraging life? By taking to the road we free ourselves of baggage, both physical and psychological. We walk back to our original condition, to our best selves.

After many thousands of years, the nomads are disappearing, swept away by modernity. Robyn Davidson has spent a good part of her life with nomadic cultures. In this fascinating and moving essay she evokes a vanishing way of life, and notes a paradox: that even as classical nomads are disappearing, hypermobility has become the hallmark of contemporary life. In a time of environmental peril, she argues, the nomadic way with nature still offers valuable lessons. *No Fixed Address* is part lament, part evocation and part exhilarating speculative journey.

Short Blacks are gems of recent Australian writing – brisk reads that quicken the pulse and stimulate the mind

Robyn Davidson is an award-winning writer who has travelled and published widely. Her books include *Tracks*, *Desert Places*, Quarterly Essay 24: *No Fixed Address: Nomads and the Future of the Planet* and, as editor, *The Picador Book of Journeys* and *The Best Australian Essays 2009*. Her essays have appeared in *Granta*, the *Monthly*, the *Bulletin* and *Griffith Review*, amongst others.

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