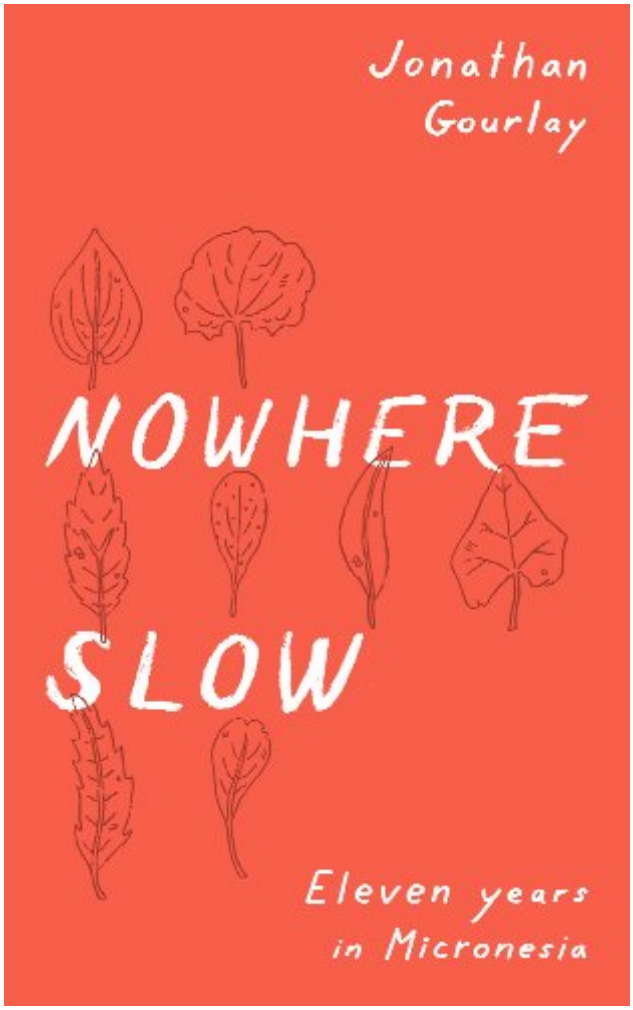
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Nowhere Slow: Eleven Years In Micronesia



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Synopsis

The Bygone Bureau presents Nowhere Slow: Eleven Years in Micronesia, Jonathan Gourlay's memoir of cultural confusion, hilarity and tragedy, and a decade of soul-searching.In 1997, Jonathan Gourlay travels to the island of Pohnpei, in the western Pacific Ocean, to teach English at the College of Micronesia. He is a stranger in a strange land, unfamiliar with the language, the intricacies of Pohnpeian social life, and most of all, the mildly psychotropic drink sakau. But the society that he blunders into eventually becomes his adopted home for the next eleven years. Along the way, Gourlay endures plenty of minor embarrassments and one major heartbreak: his whirlwind marriage to a Pohnpeian woman comes apart and ends in tragedy, leaving him to pick up the pieces of his life and to raise his daughter alone. The Bygone Bureau (www.bygonebureau.com) is an online arts and culture magazine, winner of Best New Blog at the SXSW Interactive Web Awards in 2009.

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Customer Reviews

I am an expat too. Jonathan Gourlay did something really special with this essay collection (don't get confused, that's what it is), and while the blurb is fairly inappropriate for what it is, if you are also

sort of in a rough place in life or somewhat confused about what being "here" means, or even if you're just trying to understand a culture you'll never really understand....this book is amazing. Again, something special is at the core of this, and that is more than I could've asked for.Gourlay - call me. Let's collab on your next one, ok?

I spent four years in Pohnpei, part of which when Jonathan Gourlay was there. I can vouch for the story.I kept a fair distance between the sakau bars and myself. As soon as I arrived, I took to heart the words of wiser more experienced expats, i.e. don't go local and always keep close by funds to fly out off the island in case things go bad.For most of the expats life in the Federated States of Micronesia was unexpected and only lasted a two year contract. Many escaped from a humdrum existence and went wild. Many were confused and remained so. Many worked and made a contribution.You really are a stranger in a strange land

This memoir is touching, hilarious, and incredibly interesting. More importantly though the writing is fantastic. I had heard that he attended the Iowa Writer's Workshop and, having read this book, I am not surprised. He has done that program proud! A seemingly mundane topic (two people sitting in an open-air bar by the side of the road) becomes a lesson about the Pohnpeian culture. And a very funny one at that. I look forward to reading a lot more from Mr. Gourlay in the future.

A great story of an outsider trying really hard to fit in to a world that seems simply inexplicable to the non native. The writing is entertaining and thoughtful. The organization of chapters is highly non-linear, though, which makes for a little bit of confusion as to what's history and future at each point.

This is a very sad short book, sad in its descriptions, in its imagery, and in its author's substantial suffering (often self-induced suffering) in Micronesia. It has glimmers of truly excellent writing, though in parts things seem forced and repetitious. Perhaps that is merely an effect of Pohnpei on the writer though and not the other way around. A must read for those with interest in Pohnpei, and the Pacific in general.

I loved it. I bought the ebook started reading immediately and couldn't stop until I ran out of pages, and found myself going back over it a few times. JG took me on an amazing journey through my own home island. This book should be mandatory reading material to all foreigners who plan on

staying in Pohnpei for more than a day.

I really enjoyed the stories of adapting to life in Micronesia. There are many touching parts of raising his daughter there and the trials they went through. It was a great slice of life read

I've long enjoyed Jonathan Gourlay's essays in the Bygone Bureau website about his former life in Pohnpei as a teacher and later, unexpected family man, so I'm happy to see all of them (and more) bound together in this book. His work steers clear of sentimentality in capturing exactly what it's like to be a stranger in a strange land.Gourlay's deadpan wit, attention to detail, startling adventures, and ability to make the mundane magical collectively make for an entertaining read with true insights. This is compelling travel writing about a world most North Americans know little about from an insider who understands how to tell a story. Highly recommended.

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