



Detours

Tim Rogers

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Tim Rogers - the front man and singer of hugely popular rock n'roll band You Am I - is a shambolic, flamboyant and dapper Aussie flâneur - a seeker after truth, love and understanding. He's a contradiction: a hard drinking rock star with the soul of a poet; a wordsmith and a raconteur, a romantic and a realist, a bon vivant op-shop-dressed dandy. He's the wild man of Australian rock n' roll, a man who loves footy, who was brought up in the wild emptiness of Kalgoorlie, but he's now an urban hipster - a legend of Australian rock music, more at home in St Kilda than the bush.

In this offbeat and immensely charming literary memoir, Tim Rogers talks about what it is to be a man, about accepting who you are, about masculinity, love, drinking, footy, his father, being a dad, anxiety, and above all, his continuing, magical, ever-present muse - music.

It is by turns revealing, warm, self-deprecating, intimate, shocking, confessional, sharp, funny and immensely engaging.

Detours Details

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From Reader Review Detours for online ebook

Irene Paradisis says

Few books have been so hard to put down for me in recent times. I read this in three or four sittings, barely able to peel myself away from the pages. Tim Rogers so eloquently weaves his stories with depth, consideration and good humour. I laughed, cried and reflected. Memorable.

Sam Schroder says

A really long time ago, in a different lifetime, late one night in a strange little bar in Newtown, the wrong man told me that romance was a lie, that love was a curse, that everything turns out bitter, any way. Nothing ordinary is romantic, and the idea that romance is extraordinary is a Hallmark con, he said. I called bullshit. And I told him that one day, when I was sitting up in bed, reading a really good book to the man I loved, I'd be living my romantic dream. And that it would be ordinary and perfect. There was a long pause. And then he said... well... yes... that sounds pretty bloody lovely.

So... I found the man... and I read him this book... and it certainly was 'pretty bloody lovely'.

In this rambling, rambunctious, raw, revealing collection of chapters and snippets, Rogers shows us the inside of his heart, his messy head, and his ordinary, extraordinary life. We loved it. And if you love Rogers or You Am I or rock and roll, you'll love it too.

Natalie S says

As any self-respecting You Am I fan knows, Tim Rogers can spin a yarn or ten. What they may not realise is that this legendary songwriter, artist, and musician has also achieved this in a book format, without the need for a guitar, mic-stand or a drink. Okay, maybe he did need the latter. His debut memoir, Detours, is a fabulous and personal read that takes in so many different topics that you feel like you're having your own personal heart-to-heart with the dapper gentleman himself.

If there are fans out there expecting a chronological, paint-by-the-numbers, telling of You Am I's history then this is not the book for them. This volume is also not about posturing and the name-dropping of celebrities. Instead what you get is some self-deprecating anecdotes from Tim, and chapters where you're just as likely to read about a phone conversation with his mother, and his own personal thoughts about attending a local footy match with his Dad, than you are about hearing some tales from the life of a travelling muso.

Tim Rogers was born in Kalgoorlie. He says he likes dropping this interesting fact with strangers from time-to-time; but one thing's for certain, Rogers does not need to make himself more likeable, he's already someone most people would love to have a beer with. As a child his family moved around a lot and he briefly touches on this and his acne-prone adolescence. These days, he has carved out a happy existence living in a small flat in St Kilda. He is a long-distance father to his teenage daughter, Ruby, and he is in a loving relationship with a woman he affectionately calls 'The Hurricane'. The chapters where Tim describes the important women in his life are so warm and empathetic. This isn't very rock 'n' roll, but it never needed to be, because Rogers is clear that he's not some swaggering rock star 24 hours a day.

This memoir is one written by a man with many contradictions. His memories and anecdotes are nostalgic jumping around in time, space and topic. But on the flipside he craves order, particularly when he describes his grapples with anxiety and various obsessive-compulsive rituals that he regularly carries out. He can talk about the music associated with the English sixties mod scene, but he is also just as happy holding court about AFL, cricket, and other sports. To say this man is a paradox, wordsmith, and raconteur is an understatement. He is all these things and so much more.

Roger's prose is so poetic and shiny in Detours that you'd be forgiven for thinking that he had been secretly writing books under a nom de plume for years. Rogers also pens chapters called "Bagatelles", which contain shorter observations or asides, and these are like little gems with a thought wrapped up in a joke and finished off in technicolour. There is no fat left on the bone in this book, each paragraph is more insightful and engaging than the last and that is the true hallmark of a great storyteller and artist.

Detours is an exciting debut from an Australian artist and Renaissance man. The book is positively brimming with different things, including how to be a man, dad, brother, bandmate, lover, friend, etc. It's so darned engaging and enjoyable that you'll be seeking out Tim at a pub near you just so you can continue hearing his story. On that note, let us all charge our glasses to Messer Rogers and his literary finery.

D.A.Calf says

My lord, what a thing of beauty this is.

Katherine says

It's thoughtful, introspective and philosophical. But it was heavy reading for me, which is why it took me so very long to get through it. If you're a fan of You Am I though, you'll probably love it.

Brendan Brooks says

I picked this up expecting entertaining anecdotes of debauched rock n roll life.

Instead I found an artist.

Stuart says

Tim Rogers' book is a fascinating insight into a unique and enigmatic mainstay on the Australian music scene. I took a passing interest in his music with You Am I as a teenager growing up in the '90s but it was his performances and 'anything goes' approach to style that drew my attention most.

Through his writing, Tim presents a gentle but fascinating observation of the human condition which plays out as he recollects stories and his struggles with anxiety that transcends the typical biographical form. Tim seamlessly mixes abject melancholy with humour and affection.

My favourite book of 2017.

Luke says

Five stars. I suppose it's unlikely I would have rated any other way, really, given how much of my early adulthood was soundtracked by the guy. See, for nerdy dorks of my age and type, Tim Rogers' work is pretty important. I've written about that here if you'd fancy further solipsism - but suffice it to say You Am I were (and are) a band that made you feel like you could give it a go, and that there was stuff and a place out there for you, too.

Yeah, there are big rock moves, and big rock appetites. But then behind it all was someone who wrote songs about OCD, who felt an impostor, and who used Townshend windmills to blur reality, just a bit.

What Tim's produced here is a wordy, worthy work that, while it does have enough rock to be going on with, focuses more on the introspective, ritual, sad side of things. There's enough books on blow and blowjobs, and while at least one of those features here, Rogers is smart enough to know that there's no point trying to rewrite *Hammer of the Gods* or *The Dirt*. Instead, we have this: a flâneur's fiddlings; a ragamuffin's recitations. Suitable, given his sartorial choices.

With fedoras worn at rakish angles and jewellery a must, I looked like an oafish Quentin Crisp.

Detours appeals precisely because of its reluctance to be a 'proper' bio. As the title suggests, this is a collection of wanderings: through cities, through memory, through perspective. There's a couple of chapters headed BAGATELLES which offer snippets of anecdotes, sort of amuses-bouche featuring Don Walker and nobodies. They're like a Whitman's Sampler of experience, something that makes sense when you consider the bower-bird of the author's tastes.

Here, you won't get a dry list of recording dates, you won't get studio banter. But you will get a portrait that augurs with the one you may have gleaned from some songs you've most likely heard.

(Would someone unfamiliar with the guy's output read this book? I wonder.)

It's strange: the book feels a lot more personal than other autobiographies I've read. Almost too much so, in some places - we're given a view of stuff that's obviously painful, and I wonder how much of the book was written as a way to lock away, to cage events and habits that've loomed in his life. It's pretty brave writing: it would undoubtedly be easier to bang out a memoir about rockin' every fuckin' night. (I mean hell, we know Gene Simmons isn't going to be giving out any free rides to the Town of Introspection any time soon.) But here we are. After all,

I realised that years of impropriety have left me as open as a newspaper on the street in the rain.
There is no point in trying to hide my foibles or fuck-ups, as they've given me so much source material for songs.

The drug and alcohol stuff is brutally honest - deciding to tell the great unwashed about the time you picked up your kid fucked out of your head has to be difficult - but it's stuff like this that hits hard. The consumption's not played up as Rainbow Room hi-jinks, which is kind of the point, I guess: Tim's just trying to get through this shit, like all of us. And sometimes it's hard to read, but the sense is - even when hogtied by bald-faced fear - that the author's continuing onwards and upwards. And fuck, as a sidelines observer for decades, that's deep-down good to hear.

There's a lot of love in this book, a necessary opponent to the self-loathing and anxiety that swims in the sclera of the thing. His partner, The Hurricane, sounds a necessary, irresistible tonic. The man's desire to be a good dad is palpable, the fuel that runs him, and his regard and love for bandmates past and present - both Box the Jesuit's Goose and current brother-in-arms Davey Lane receive effusive praise - is on ready display. When he's writing about someone he loves, Rogers is at his most disarming: there's no artifice, just a desire to communicate how fuckin' great he thinks these people are.

The other big love that guides a lot of the writing here is sport. Memories of Kalgoorlie kicks, reminders of the importance of the tennis ball and the scoop bat, descriptions of a rag-tag assemblage of blokes with fucked knees giving it a go for the sheer release, or of the nerve-soothing salve that is cricket commentary - they're discussed at length. I'm not a sporty kind of guy, either in traditional or Graney modes, but I enjoyed it in a manner similar to hearing Murakami talk about running.

It's definitely interesting to have read this after Tex Perkins' autobiography, as the two authors have a very different approach. Tex's book is self-aware, true, but there's always a sense of confidence, of ability there. *Detours* is testament to the fact that behind the appearance of success there can be the Child Catcher-like figure of self-doubt, of self-loathing, of ritualised behaviour designed to tamp down the anxiety of just existing. Both Perkins and Rogers are loved artists, and great storytellers - but I reckon more schlubs like me feel the drivers of *Detours* than they do the assuredness of *Tex*.

Enough rambling. If you've ever liked *You Am I*, or Rogers' other work, this is the book for you. I fuckin' loved it. It was as loud and effete and brash and sad and beautiful as I'd hoped.

(And was quietly relieved he didn't mention that dick that kept turning up to shows and calling out for them to play 'Shame' in 94-97. Sorry 'bout that, Tim.)

GBTFLOU, folks.

(Some ephemera which will aid the reader with this work: there is a lengthy, lovely discussion between Tim and writer Andrew McMillen available at McMillen's Penmanship Podcast, and some beaut photographs of his apartment available [here](#). Both are worth a gander.)

Kirsten says

I've always admired Rogers as a lyricist so I don't know why I was surprised that he is also a superb memoirist.

Detours is a beautifully composed, funny, poignant journey into Rogers life. Full of unexpected depth and writing that takes your breath away.

Chapter four is one of the most perfect love letters I've ever read.

Carolyn Adams says

Self reflection that never quite invites you in.

Cherry Bob*omb says

Like the author himself, this is an interesting little beast of a book. I filled it with highlights and bookmarks which will sadly disappear as the library ebook self destructs tomorrow- which is almost a fitting epitaph. Timmy is a poet. He has a way with words and a way with music and a way with style that inspired a bunch of 14 year olds girls enough to imitate his old man op shop chic in the 90s. Parts of this book, I just internally sighed in joy, like a warm cup of tea on a busy winter day.

Parts of it I was crazy bored and skimmed.

Parts of it I just felt really sad, not because old Timmy has expressed his malaise so well, but because despite the whole book being nothing but introspective, it's also far from insightful. There's no doubt the fella is a pretty much a functioning alcoholic, but according to him he's not depressed, though he bloody well is depressed because its impossible to drink that much and not be depressed. Dude just has a romantic notion of depression, rather than a deep understanding of his own issues. There are also whiffs of Asperger's- the food obsession alone could have been written about my 6 year old autistic son. He's clearly functioning, creating amazing art, but his life seems half-lived, filled with anxiety as it is, which filled the reading experience with melancholy.

Darren Goossens says

Review from <https://darrengoossens.wordpress.com/2018/11/16/detours-by-tim-rogers/>.

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Tim Rogers

Detours

Fourth Estate, 2018. 338 pages.

First, a caveat; I've been listening to Tim Rogers play music since the millennium just gone. I've seen him and an assortment of others play in University refectories, various pubs, Casa del Resaca and the Sydney Opera House. I've got the CDs, I've got a t-shirt somewhere. On the other hand, I refused to go see You Am I go all nostalgia and play *Hi Fi Way* and *Hourly, Daily* back to back a few years ago. What does that mean in the context of these comments? It means I want the book to be good. Objectivity ... must be in doubt.

The cover of *Detours* by Tim Rogers.

It's probably useful to begin with what this book is not. It is not an autobiography. It does not begin and the beginning and end, if not the end, then at least the present. It's a memoir, a self-portrait in words. Sure, it covers his childhood -- or at least a few key episodes. It covers where he's at now and how he feels about it and how he gets through the days. But you won't find out how You Am I formed. Or, at least, not very directly. We get a few words on the band he formed with his brother. That's about it. How did he meet Andy Kent? Or Russell Hopkinson or Mark Tunaley or ... it's not here. What was it like working with Lee Ranaldo or Jackie Orszáczky or ... it's not here. Not a hint of a discography. Most of the albums are not even mentioned in passing. So, in short, this not not a book about You Am I. It's a book about Tim, and about what was and is going on inside him. This is not a negative remark; it's just a statement of fact. I think one useful thing a review can do is give a sense of the kind of book we're looking at. I'll admit I've panned the odd book on these pages, but I generally try to give an idea of what you're in for and, yes, that includes strengths and weaknesses. But if I think a book might be solid but just not for me, I try to say so.

So what what does the book give you? It gives you Tim. What he thinks, what he feels, how he reacts, how he gets by, what's important to him, and who's important to him. Even there, it's often off screen. Clearly his daughter is a focus of his orbit, but he never narrates a major episode with her in it the way he does with footy friends and drinking companions. She's always tugging at his mind, but he doesn't render the encounter, just a few words of a phone call or something. Maybe it's too central to him to share with us, and that's fair enough.

If you like the idea of sitting down (or standing up, more likely) in a bar and listening to Tim Rogers pour out his thoughts on everything from footy to Loudon Wainwright to CheesyBite and Davey Lane, this is the book for you. If you want evocative thumbnail portraits of his dad or his first girlfriend, this is the book for you. If you've really listened to his lyrics and noted his preoccupations, this is the book for you -- though you won't find out what triggered the writing of 'Purple Sneakers' or 'Heavy Heart' or 'We Hardly Knew You'. Not in any specific sense. But you will get an idea of his preoccupations and working habits, and that's what these things flow from. You will read 'the boy's angry at the water' and a few other insights, but what we're really glimpsing here is Tim Rogers' inner world brought out. He's frank about his mental struggles and how he's dealt -- or not -- with them. It's like a case self-study written by an eloquent subject.

Rogers writes with style. He uses words you might expect -- peccadilloes, wankers, cirrhosis -- but as always he turns up unexpected and (usually) effective metaphor. There's no hint of a ghost-writer in a book like this -- there wouldn't be enough money in it to pay one anyway -- and every page is stamped with the character of the author. At one point he discusses the trashing of hotel rooms, and figures it's just mean to the cleaners, and why would a rock star want to pick on a cleaner who's working long hours for low pay? Hell, they leave a tip if they spill a beer in the room. He's been way down yet he's kind of famous and he's rubbed shoulders with greats. It gives him an interesting perspective on, well, the big questions of life, like "where's the next drink coming from?"

If you've followed Tim through the highs of 'Beautiful Girl' and the Lows of 'Obviously' and 'Part Time Dads', then a lot here will not come as a surprise. But there's a lot to like about this self-portrait, a cubist view that gives facets and leaves gaps and relies on technique as much as content.

Just don't come in expecting a chronology, discography or even an index. It's not that kind of book.

You and I.

Lauren Deville says

This book is way too 'sartorial' ... I want to rip off the layers of vocabulary and carefully constructed sentences to find out what Rogers is really lined with.

Glad I stuck with it though. There's some fascinating and funny moments, plus some glimmers of great insight. Smart man.

Tonile {My Cup and Chaucer} says

One of the most beautifully-written memoirs I've ever read. Chapters three and four are highlights for me.

Barrie Seppings says

Found a lot that was familiar in this delightful, funny and slightly off-centre book: a childhood in the deserts of W.A; the quiet terrors of growing up awkward in suburban Australia; the glorious discovery of a whole world of music they didn't play on FM radio. There's no tired rock n' roll debauchery in this collection of memories and musings on a life constructed almost out of necessity but also built to accommodate no-one's ambitions except his own. Like Rogers' music, there are a lot of words packed in here, but he's at his best when he's unboxing the simple mysteries of an informal yet highly-structured collection of men who come together on a regular basis to kick a footy around. I don't chase footballs (never found the appeal), but I do want the opportunity to hang out with Rogers and The Kick. If only he'd tell us where they meet. A gentle, intelligent read. Unexpectedly enjoyable.
