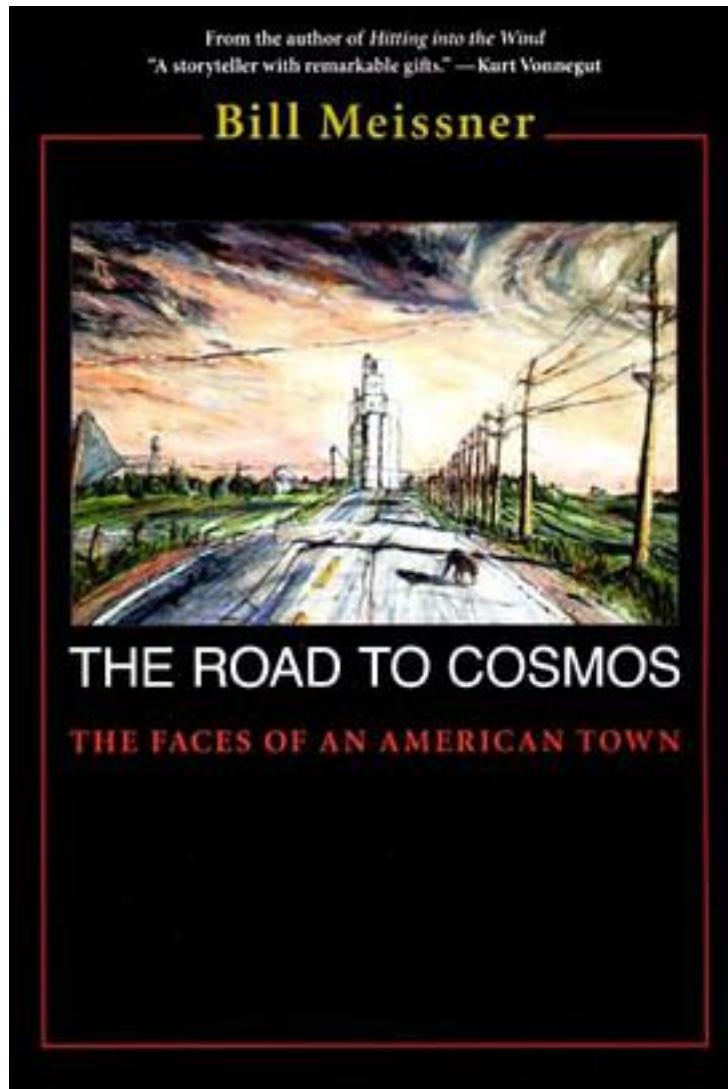


The Road to Cosmos



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In his second short story collection, Bill Meissner explores the consciousness of Cosmos, U.S.A, a small town that is anything but ordinary. Though it has its share of residents intent on keeping the world on an even keel, Cosmos is blessed with a healthy number of eccentrics who are chasing their dreams, idiosyncratic as they may be, or struggling to distinguish themselves as individuals. We meet Duane, hoping to build a replica of Stonehenge with salvaged cars; Norm, the local weatherman, longing to be the first person to film the inside of a tornado; Elmo, a groundskeeper, seeking perfection on his baseball field; and Dolores--convinced Elvis is still alive--attempting to overcome the pain of her husband's desertion. Threaded through the collection are poignant childhood memories told through the voice of Skip Carrigan, a native son, who left and returned years later. Skip's stories chronicle a sometimes tender, sometimes stormy relationship with his father; through Skip's mature perspective, Meissner artfully comments on the growth and change of America itself during recent decades. The residents of Cosmos orbit the town like planets, some of them pulling away, others moving ever closer to its center. Cosmos, though a small Midwestern town, contains universal characters, each of them struggling to find order, love, and identity amid the chaos of their lives.

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