



## Just One Restless Rider: Reflections on Trains and Travel

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In *Just One Restless Rider*, Carlos Schwantes invites readers to climb aboard for a ride they'll never forget. This sweeping memoir reflects a lifetime's love of observing and riding trains. Growing up in Indiana, Schwantes was enthralled by trains speeding through his town and especially dreamt of one day riding the Pennsylvania Railroad's all-Pullman flagship, *Spirit of St. Louis*. Now the "dean of travel historians," Schwantes recalls his many trips along the legendary rails of America and traces the evolution of American passenger trains from the 1950s to the present. The recollections are illustrated with a host of the author's own photos that capture old steam engines, ultramodern European terminals, and even the staff of a luxury train in action.

In 1993, Schwantes was invited to travel as a lecturer aboard the cruise train *American Orient Express*, a dream come true that enabled him to log personal reflections and take photos over the course of twelve years; he subsequently rode tens of thousands of miles on more than thirty separate train cruises. His narrative includes reflections on life aboard American and European trains and embraces not only trains themselves but also the view from the car windows as he ponders the meaning of passing skylines. His photographic eye eschews stereotypical shots of locomotives and cars, instead seeking images of trains, stations, and passengers that more fully depict the human journey.

From boyhood memories of the Pennsy—"the mightiest thing I knew"—to adult travels, Schwantes takes in the rich history and lore of rail travel. He muses over the legend of ghostly brakeman Joe Baldwin on the Wilmington and Manchester, decapitated in an accident and said to walk the nighttime tracks swinging his lantern in search of his missing head. He discovers the confusing variety in timetables issued by the numerous British lines following the privatization of British Rail and the adventure of sharing a coach with cigarette smugglers in Eastern Europe. And he hears the recollections of old railroad men like Bill Dixon, retired president of the famed Rock Island Line ("a mighty good road").

By the time Schwantes actually rode on the *Spirit of St. Louis* in 1970, it had been downsized to a single coach and left him a rider even more restless than those celebrated by Arlo Guthrie in the song "City of New Orleans."

*Just One Restless Rider* is an enjoyable trip for those with the "disappearing railroad blues" or anyone who has ever been captivated by the rhythm of the rails.

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