



## Truck: A Love Story

*Michael Perry*

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Hilarious and heartfelt, *Truck: A Love Story* is the tale of a man struggling to grow his own garden, fix his old pickup, and resurrect a love life permanently impaired by Neil Diamond. In the process, he sets his hair on fire, is attacked by wild turkeys, and proposes marriage to a woman in New Orleans. The result is a surprisingly tender testament to love.

## Truck: A Love Story Details

Date : Published October 17th 2006 by Harper

ISBN : 9780060571177

Author : Michael Perry

Format : Hardcover 304 pages

Genre : Autobiography, Memoir, Nonfiction, Humor

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## From Reader Review Truck: A Love Story for online ebook

### Kellie Williams says

About a year ago I went to a reading by Michael Perry and something he said stuck with me. He said that people who have never lived in Wisconsin find the things we do here very exotic and interesting. Having a fiancé who's originally from Texas and is still experiencing some culture shock, I had a good laugh at Perry's observation. After reading this novel, I see how Perry has used our weird Wisconsinite quirks to make what we consider normal everyday life interesting. Perry tells the story of what it was like for him to be a single man living in a small town in central Wisconsin. He ties together his successes and failures at gardening, meeting a new woman, and bringing his old International truck back to life. I'm not sure what readers outside us Northerners would think of us after reading Perry's story, but it's certainly relatable no matter where you are. This is a great read for anyone looking for a light-hearted story with a feel-good ending.

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### Christine Keleny says

"All I wanted to do was fix my old pickup truck," says Michael Perry. "That, and plant my garden. Then I met this woman. . . ." *Truck: A Love Story* recounts a year in which Perry struggles to grow his own food ("Seed catalogs are responsible for more unfulfilled fantasies than Enron and Penthouse combined"), live peaceably with his neighbors (one test-fires his black powder rifle in the alley), and sort out his love life. But along the way, he sets his hair on fire, is attacked by wild turkeys, takes a date to the fire department chicken dinner, and proposes marriage to a woman in New Orleans. As with *Population: 485*, much of the spirit of *Truck: A Love Story* may be found in the characters Perry meets: a one-eyed land surveyor, a paraplegic biker who rigs a sidecar so that his quadriplegic pal can ride along, a bartender who refuses to sell light beer, an enchanting woman who never existed, and half the staff of National Public Radio.

By turns hilarious and heartfelt, a tale that begins on a pile of sheep manure, detours to the Whitney Museum of American Art, and returns to the deer-hunting swamps of northern Wisconsin, *Truck: A Love Story* becomes a testament to the surprising and unintended consequences of love.1006(

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### Marissa says

This one should probably be more like 3 and a half stars, but I guess I'll round up. As someone who went to college in a rural midwestern town, I appreciated the nice reflections on life in a similar setting. The best parts of the book are when the writing has a certain stripped down emotional clarity about it that sneaks up and really gets to you and which reminded me a little of Scott Carrier's writing, which can have a very similar quality of profound simplicity (or maybe simple profundity?). It is definitely refreshing and unusual to read something by a somewhat liberal, feminist-sympathizing redneck guy as an antidote to the unending refrain of an America increasingly polarized along republican/liberal, rural/urban lines.

My main criticism is that sometimes the lack of variation in the sentence structure started to wear. Also, not all of the reflections are as funny and/or deep as they could be and occasionally felt a little contrived. Still worth reading.

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## Walt says

This is a review of **TRUCK, A LOVE STORY** by Michael Perry.

Don't you think the title of this book **TRUCK, A LOVE STORY** seems a little hokey, maybe even manipulative? It's as if its author — or more likely, the book's editor/publisher, who most often does the naming — wanted to broaden the book's market appeal. How many women would read a book titled **TRUCK**? How many men would read **A LOVE STORY** (setting aside that old romance novel by Eric Segal, which was made into a movie)? However, I guess it could be said that this particular book appeals to broader audiences than those just enamored of a particular vehicle or of touchy-feely stories of romance and love.

Well, all of that is beside the point. The book is good, worth reading whether you're a male or female or somewhere in between. Michael Perry writes well, even if it seems sometimes he has too much on his mind. I happened to read this with a book club comprised primarily of women. They generally outnumber the men in the group three or four to one. Many of the books we read could be considered more or less feminine oriented and sometimes I've even heard the women themselves utilize the term chick lit. Because they outnumber the men so far this is the dynamic we men in the group have to live with. But truthfully, we cover a broad swath of interesting fiction and nonfiction, mostly fiction, which brings me to this book.

Is **TRUCK, A LOVE STORY** fiction or nonfiction? It reads like a memoir, but I never did really see anywhere where it claims to be nonfiction. Perhaps, Michael Perry realizes that imaginations always figure into memories and experiences anyway. (The author after all writes, "Fortunately, the eye is an organ capable of deception. In collusion with the brain, it convinces you to ignore what you see — or don't see.) Or perhaps I just missed where it says what it is.

This is a slow reading piece, a work you want to take your time with, a book you might start reading in bed at night if you want to go to sleep. Now I don't mean by that to say that it is boring or anything derogatory. But don't compare it with today's fast-paced fare, which seems targeted at hyperactivity disordered readers. This isn't calculated to keep you on the edge of your seat, shrieking, or covering your eyes in order to cope. Instead it'll make you want to languish like you are in the Bahamas on the beach with unlimited time and plenty of food and drink by your side with the most charming companion.

Where does a truck come in to all of this? Perry is restoring an old International Harvester truck with his brother. The restoration ticks off the time in the book. Perry's attitude is communicated in this manner: "In 1951, a man bought a pickup truck because he needed to blow things up and move them. Things like bricks and bags of feed. Somewhere along the line trendsetters and marketers got involved, and now we buy pickups — big, horse-powered, overbuilt, wide-assed, comfortable pickups — so that we may stick our key in the ignition of an icon, fire up an image, and drive off in a cloud of connotations. I have no room to talk. I long to get my International running in part so I can drive down roads that no longer exist."

Who is Perry? He describes himself: "At thirty-eight, I'm still a few follicles from a Category Cue Ball." This is one of his obsessions, besides his truck. He says, "I was raised in a fundamentalist Christian sect that not only frowned on vanity but viewed long hair on a man as sinful." He also describes himself as follows: "No matter our vocation, we so often find ourselves living life as a form of triage. I need more time with the dirt, the sense of the soil with its plenty." So gardening is another of his — I don't want to say obsessions — passions.

Family is another honored subject for the author. Speaking of his grandmother, he says "this time she raised five children of her own and took in another twenty-eight foster children. She did her baking with a .22 rifle at hand and was known to step away from the stove to snipe feral cats and once an incautious woodchuck."

And what of the love story part of the title? Well, there is Anneliese. But I can't say more without spoiling it for you, so I'll shut up and just recommend that you pick up the book, especially if you appreciate a good turn of word in the lathe of literature. If you like anecdotes stacked within the framework of car restoration and raising turnips while discovering a love interest, then find a beach in the South Pacific or Caribbean and languish away with **TRUCK, A LOVE STORY** in hand.

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### **Scott S. says**

Another great book from an author I discovered only a month ago, **Truck** mines some of the same subject matter that made his earlier **Population: 485** such an interesting read. The easygoing, conversational-style reflections on growing older in a small Midwestern town, all the while fixing up a battered '51 International Harvester pickup *and* possibly finding true love, had the right amount of humor and heart. But wait, there's even more - like gardening, hunting, family relationships - and Perry covers it all with a quiet charm.

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### **Valerie Kyriosity says**

My book group is meeting next Tuesday (that's four days from now) and I haven't started either of the two books we're supposed to discuss. One of them I have; the other I'll need to borrow. Which rebuked me into finishing up the last one I borrowed, which we discussed a couple of months ago when I was about a chapter and a half from the end: *Truck: A Love Story* Yeah...two months for a chapter and a half...I deserve that *tsk, tsk* you're thinking at me.

Michael Perry can write. In particular, he's a machine-gun metaphorist, firing off more on an average page than I can come up with in an average year. He crafts beautiful phrases, tells delightful stories, delivers funniful punchlines, and occasionally preaches wisdomful sermonettes. (His inconsistency on that last item, however, is a point of caution.) Here are a few of the shorter bits I tagged with soon-to-be-removed sticky notes (ah, the heartache of borrowing a book so worthy of underlining and margin-scribbling!):

"...deep green zucchini squash lying boa-belly fat in the grass..." (56)

"He has given me moments that will forever inflect the lexicon of my heart." (105)

"Greg Brown's voice sounds as if it was aged in a whiskey caks, cured in an Ozarks smokehouse, dropped down a stone well, pulled out damp, and kept moist in the palm of a wicked woman's hand." (127)

For the record, Greg Brown is on Pandora. Knowing that Perry and some friends have also recorded a bit, I checked for his name and was warned away by an explicit lyrics alert. Page 76 ("My name is more common. If she had Googled me, she would have discovered that I was: Robert W. Woodruff Professor of Law at Emory University and a leading authority on the relationship of morality to law; a self-appointed expert on cocker spaniels (*'Dealing with fleas? Ask me!'*); Nellie B. Smith Chair of Oncology for the University fo Missouri at Columbia; scenic artist for *Flight Night Part 2*; author of *The Groom's Survival Manual*; or, a

board-certified sexologist from California whose 'hot' products include the Love Swing.") was missing "foul-mouthed musician of indeterminate genre (because I wasn't tempted to click and listen)."

"Despite my backsliding in the areas of tears and rage, it is my conviction that over the past several decades, the repression of feelings has been undervalued. After a lifetime of being harangued to *let it all out*, I am heartened by recent studies indicating the people who repress their emotions have a higher heart attack survival rate than people who are overly emotional. I know people who are *constantly* 'letting it all out,' and their spirits remain unimproved. I humbly submit that the world could do with a little more keeping it in. Sometimes caring people tell me I am repressing my anger. My chosen response is to meet their gaze intently, let one eye drift slowly inward, and reply: " (169)

"...paddling laps in a demitasse of home-brewed ennui..." (251)

"...sitting beneath quiet stars that wrap all the way around the world." (268)

[Describing guests at his wedding} "...a group of people perhaps best summarized as *without whom*." (270)

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### **Maureen Alden says**

Small-town Wisconsin life....written by a fellow UW Eau Claire grad who attended the same years I did. A rare combination of humor, romance, and a bit of history. And his romance began at the Fall Creek library....awwww, warms a librarian's heart!

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### **Michael says**

A delightful exploration of the pleasures and challenges of rural Wisconsin life. The theme of rebuilding a 1951 International Harvester pick-up and building a new relationship as Perry approaches a balding forty provides a coherent framework for the year's worth of progress in monthly chapters full of "mini" essays full of humor and wisdom. He occasionally goes "over the top" with piled on metaphors, but it's all in good fun, with any tendency to preachiness balanced by his humility and self-deprecation. As an example, sample this paean to the pleasure of listening to Greg Brown: "Greg Brown's voice sounds as if it was aged in a whiskey cask, cured in an Ozarks smokehouse, dropped down a stone well, pulled out damp, and kept moist in the palm of a wicked woman's hand. ... A Greg Brown song doesn't make me want to whoop and holler, it makes me want to sift bare-handed through the dirt for repentance and then go looking for a woman who doesn't mind a few chickens."

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### **Lindsey says**

I never laugh out loud at books but this one got me many times. Very enjoyable and fun to read.

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## **AC says**

This book resonated with me on too many levels to write.

I enjoyed Perry's self-deprecating wit and felt as though he found the story of a year in his life cathartic to pen. It seemed very personal and I appreciated his willingness to not only expose his faults and challenges, but to show confidence in his strengths and accomplishments.

It was inspiring to read about another man who isn't perfect either but honestly and truly tries to shore up his few shortcomings and face the world another day in a stoic, Scandinavian way. :)

I was struck by the obvious love and support of his family and how from various members it manifested differently. It wasn't over the top affection but the sense of loyalty and bond was there.

I took too long to read this book and it wasn't long enough.

Read this book for a reason to love the Midwest and the people who live in small towns.

P.S. Michael Perry has shot near to the top of the "People I want to have a beer with" list. (Although it's quite fine if I'm the only one of us with a beer)

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## **Amy John says**

Perry's writing is like a warm blanket on a cold winter night. For the most part, the narrative is continually engaging, although I admit to having to reread a few paragraphs to get the imagery straight in my brain. There were some genuine laugh out loud moments - not a mere chuckle, but a guffaw - where I actually found myself putting the book down for a second to enjoy the moment.

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## **Marisa says**

I really wanted to like this book better. I read it as part of April's radio show theme of "An emerging genre - books where the author chronicles an experience or goal for a year in the tradition of *A Year in Provence* or *Animal Vegetable Miracle*" -- *I can't say I was all that impressed. Perry's theme of taking a year to fix up his old International truck, is what intrigued me at first. I liked the idea of a project book about using your hands. However, the book ended up being more of a journal or just chronicle of his thoughts and daily goings-ons. He would spend pages listing all the cookbooks in his house or friends in his small town. While these details are what make small town living so great, I didn't necessarily want ALL of these snippets. On the bright side, I did like that by the end you felt like Perry was a friend, or someone who you knew pretty well -- something to be appreciated in nonfiction writing.*

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## **Hannah says**

I really can't remember the last time I enjoyed a book so much. The writing is so thoroughly entertaining and engaging, it makes activities completely outside my sphere of interest (deer hunting and automotive restoration, among other things) seem compelling and almost noble. And Perry has a gift for capturing everyday experiences in a way that is both thought-provoking and hilarious.

Oddly enough, I was surprised to discover that *Truck: A Love Story* is, in fact, a love story (as opposed to a story about a guy in love with his truck). And, also to my surprise, it was the happy ending and the romantic bits I enjoyed the least—probably because that's where Perry waxes the most big-picture philosophical/theological. Perry's theology seems to be a lot like a marshmallow: sweet, squishy, and lacking substance. But in his defense, that's really not the point of this book.

I have a hard time imagining a person who couldn't find something to love about this book. And anybody who can write with wit and insight about dirt track stock car racing, Camille Paglia, and the state of American poetry—all in a single paragraph, no less—has got to be some kind of literary genius. No, really.

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### **Marlene says**

Review Part 1: I have to confess, I skimmed the last half. Maybe if I had more time I'd have stuck with it, but it was overdue at the library, I had another book I needed to finish for my book club, and, frankly, this one was just not holding my attention. I usually enjoy books like this, and it got off to a good start - e.g., writing about the allure of seed catalogs - but after a while it started to feel like reading someone's moderately amusing blog. Perhaps you need to be a guy to appreciate all the minutiae of sanding the paint off an International truck and dirt track racing. I seldom start a book that I don't finish, but this, I'm afraid, is one. Review Part 2: I decided to eat the fine and hang in and finish *Truck*, because there were enough enjoyable bits, and I was tired and cranky when I wrote the earlier review. That said, I still had to skim most of the truck rehab detail and would still say that it is more of a guys' book. Got some good recipe ideas though!

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### **Jeanette "Astute Crabbist" says**

I actually liked the parts that were NOT about the truck the best. I think it's cute the way he's not ashamed to reveal his softer side. He even admits he gets sentimental about old '80's songs you'd think were chick stuff!

Some random things I copied from the book while I was reading it:

"But what a repulsive thing to associate with food: *willpower*. As if one would parse out love or oxygen by the teaspoon."

"A gentle pox on yogis who insist on taking out ads in which they pose as human origami."

"In seventh grade, I began to care how I looked, which is a shame."

"Of course you will find fellows in blaze orange who have confused their rifles with their penises (and what fun to poll their wives and lovers for the purpose of drafting a list titled Top Ten Reasons the Metaphor is Inapt.)"

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