

Excerpts from *Walking Woodstock* *Journeys into the Wild Heart of America's Most Famous Small Town*

“Michael Perkins and Will Nixon step out into the Catskill mountains. They read the landscape like a book, and hold it open for us, wild and accessible, and invite us into the crags and balsams, the splendorous views. Their enthusiasm is catchy. We drink big gulps of the morning air without ever leaving our armchair.”

--Janine Pommy Vega,
The Green Piano

“The writing is crisp and inviting, and the mix of current detail and historical anecdotes will keep readers interested. For me, it was just plain old fun to dip into.”

--Edward Sanders,
America: A History in Verse

“Walking Woodstock is a graceful and honest book written with a poet's keen appreciation for the beauty that surrounds us and the deep pleasure of experiencing our highways and byways afoot. A story of friendship, companionship, and mutual respect—a lovely duet.”

--Kenneth Wapner,
Catskill Rambles

“These rambles of discovery around historic Woodstock will inspire you to depart the malls and walls and rediscover the natural world with new eyes. Several stories recount in fascinating detail adventures in the Catskill mountains, and ‘Lost’ is one of the best tales of disorientation I’ve yet read.”

--Carol White,
*Catskill Day Hikes
for All Seasons*

“The lake stretched before us, suddenly illuminated by full sun glinting on the water. It’s an extraordinary sight, its beauty on a par with any landscape in Switzerland or the Sierras. As we stood there drinking in the view, Will noticed a geyser on the far side of the lake, water spouting: ‘Is that the famous Cooper Lake whale?’ he asked. The morning was so magical I could even believe in dragons, forget about whales.”

--From “*Bewitched Pigs Dance on Their Noses in Mink Hollow, and a Whale Spouts in Cooper Lake: A True Report*” by Michael Perkins

“In one of my favorite John Cheever stories, ‘The Swimmer,’ Neddy Merrill, the boyish protagonist, decides, after finishing his glass of gin beside a friend’s pool on a summer afternoon, to swim home via the backyard pools strung across his suburban community. Inspired by this quixotic journey, I decided to mark the Woodstock Land Conservancy’s twentieth anniversary by hiking across town on Conservancy lands.”

--From “*Sloan Gorge Preserve*”
by Will Nixon

“On one of those golden October mornings that you wish could be bottled for sipping throughout the year, four of us set forth to explore what might have been the first road from Kingston to Woodstock, a ‘lost road’ called Waghkonck.”

--From “*Deep Ruts the Wagons Made*” by Michael Perkins



“The ice patch between the roots and trail stones didn’t look slippery, not with dirt and leaves mixed into the milky gray remnant of winter under the hemlocks. Nor was Michael’s fall dramatic. His boots slid down the gentle slope. He landed as if to do a push-up, his face down beside a small tree. For a moment I thought nothing of it. We’d all but reached our destination, the white castle-like towers of ice catching the spray from Kaaterskill Falls. The morning couldn’t have been prettier. A brilliant blue sky. An early spring nip in the air. But when Michael rolled over I saw a grimace like I’d never seen.”

--From “*Emergency!*” by Will Nixon

“I can’t imagine going for a walk without a stick in hand. It must stand about thirty-eight inches, be light but strong, and fit in my hand as if it emerged from the womb with me. It helps me to balance, it is a useful tool against pests, it helps push impediments from my path, and above all, it keeps me company. Henry Miller called his bicycle his best friend, and I consider my collection of walking sticks close company.”

--From “*In Praise of Walking Sticks*” by Michael Perkins



“I glanced at my compass, although I didn’t need to. The topography was guiding me right across the saddle. In the shifting mist I sensed the massive sweep of Hunter Mountain just ahead like a photograph about to emerge in developing fluid.

“But my compass needle pointed backwards. It said I was walking 180° in the wrong direction.”

--From “*Lost*” by Will Nixon



“On an overcast Columbus Day morning I left the Woodstock Village Green with the good wishes of the steering committee of the Woodstock Bicentennial Celebration ringing in my ears, and started off on a four and a half day solo walk across northern Connecticut to Woodstock, Connecticut, tucked away in the quiet northeastern part of the Nutmeg State.”

--From “*Walking to Woodstock: Notes of a Tireless Pedestrian*” by Michael Perkins