

Discussion Questions for *Wherever the Road Leads*

1. Why are readers drawn to stories about real people and events? What pleasures can be found in a travel memoir? Does *Wherever the Road Leads* fulfill your expectations for a travel memoir?
2. The author starts the story with a short episode that takes place in Paris. Did this vignette help you get immediately involved in the story and the characters? What details did this section reveal about Tom and Katie?
3. Tom wants to get married “so it will be easier to cross borders.” Why do you think Katie agrees to marry Tom?
4. The author includes an afternoon at the beginning of the trip when she and Tom discuss the meaning of the word “Zouave.” What does this episode show about Katie? About Tom?
5. The author uses conversations to reveal much of the feeling and emotion between the couple. In the preface she says, “I . . . created dialogue based on my knowledge of the characters, how they usually spoke to each other, recollection of the conversation taking place, and the context.” How does this use of dialogue affect your understanding of a memoir and its degree of truthfulness?
6. As an engineer, Tom is often occupied with car repairs and constructing improvements for the van. How does this affect their trip? How does Katie feel about all the down time that results?
7. Katie and Tom divide up chores and responsibilities along fairly traditional lines. Why did they do this? What would you have done? How would you have divided the labor with your partner?
8. Were you surprised when Katie and Tom invited their school-aged niece and nephew to join them for the summer? What did the chapters with the children add to your understanding of Tom and Katie’s ideas and relationship?
9. How and why did Tom and Katie’s marriage change over the two-year trip? How would their relationship have evolved if they had stayed home? When they return home, Tom and Katie decide on an unconventional lifestyle based on Tom’s career. Do you feel they made the right decision? Was Katie’s eagerness to not return to teaching a surprise? Why or why not?
10. Is this memoir more of a travel story or a relationship story? How did the author blend the two themes? Which aspect interested you the most?