



# Round-Trip to Deadsville: A Year in the Funeral Underground

*Tim Matson*

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## **Round-Trip to Deadsville: A Year in the Funeral Underground** Tim Matson

Our narrator, Tim Matson, assaulted by middle-aged existential doubt and morbid preoccupations, sets out to confront the demons of death and the denizens of the funeral trade. His odyssey begins when he stares down a photograph of Ginseng Willard, a flinty old Vermonter who built his own coffin from a piano case, then used it as a bed for the rest of his natural days. Matson ups the ante by deciding to build his own coffin. Like any self-respecting American literary hero, he heads out on the road to learn how to go about it. Along the way he meets an unforgettable cabal of characters who populate the funeral underground--among them the Undertaker and the Crusader, the Anatomist and the Astrologer, the Organist and the Gravedigger--and learns why the living always get the last word, and why when sprinkling ashes it is best to use a wide-mouth urn.

In *Round-Trip to Deadsville*, the author taps death on the shoulder and asks to bum a ride. Sometimes you'll feel as if Buster Keaton had slipped through a trap door into a funeral parlor in backcountry Vermont. Other times you'll be at the wheel, with Hitchcock and Sartre riding shotgun. *Round-Trip to Deadsville* offers thrills, chills, and laughter, but also a face-to-face encounter with some of life's Big Questions.

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