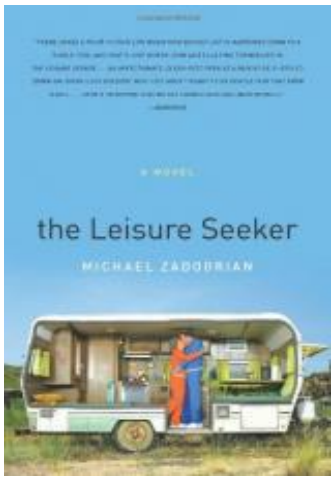
The Leisure Seeker

by Michael Zadoorian



About the Book

A sort of *Easy Rider* meets **The Notebook**, Michael Zadoorian?s poignant, funny, vibrant, and unforgettable novel, *The Leisure Seeker,* is a story of two seniors who escape from their retirement home and embark upon a hilarious and touching end-of-life road trip.

Discussion Guide

1. Do you think that John and Ella?s children should have tried to stop their parents, or perhaps to have tracked them through their credit card transactions?

2. Did it bother you that John was driving? Or do you agree with Ella (page 21) that, ?If they let sixteen-year-olds on the road? then John ?who has an excellent driving record, should be allowed to do the same??

3. How have you coped in your life with outliving friends and loved ones? Or how do you imagine that you will? How do you think it feels for Ella to have to watch John experience the loss of his best friend each time he remembers him, and asks how he?s doing?

4. John and Ella photographed all of their vacations and they watch slideshows during their evenings while crossing Route 66. Do you think that they brought a camera with them on this last trip? Do you think they should have left photos behind of this last journey for their family? Why or why not?

5. Upon seeing Cadillac Ranch (page 138-140) Ella says: ?This so-called art feels to me like a slap in my generation?s face, everything we thought we needed after the war.? What do you think it was about seeing the antique cars buried in dirt that upset Ella most?

6. Discuss Ella?s promise to John --- that neither spouse would let the other be placed in a nursing home. Was Ella right to honor their vow? Do you think John would have been to do the same for Ella?

7. Why do you think that Zadoorian chose to narrate the novel entirely in Ella?s first person voice? How would the novel change if he had decided to tell the book in several voices, such as including Kevin and Cindy?s stories? Or including the voice of a grandchild?

8. Discuss the idea of a vacation where ?the journey is the destination? and what that might mean for the modern family. Also, what wisdom does Ella wish she could go back and share with her younger self about family vacations?

9. Should someone who is mentally as sharp as a tack in a body that is failing them be able to make their own decisions about how they might pass from this world?

10. Why do you think it took a grandchild to voice that John might be developing Alzheimer?s?

11. If you had to plan one last road trip where would you go? What people or places might you stop and say goodbye to along the way? Who would be your co-pilot?

Author Bio

Michael Zadoorian was born in Detroit, Michigan and has lived in the area for his entire life. His father was a photographer for The Detroit Edison Company for 35 years, photographing nuclear power plants, parades, "All Electric Kitchens," corporate bigwigs and victims of electrocution. His mother was a homemaker. He attended the public schools in Detroit, then went on to graduate from Wayne State University with a Liberal Arts degree. In the mid eighties, he discovered the work of Raymond Carver, which inspired him to start writing fiction.

During this time, he continued to work his day job writing advertising copy for used car dealers, luncheon meats, banks and pizza chains, but kept working on his stories. Though it took a while to shake off the influence of Carver, he soon started to develop his own voice and a style that reflected his own sensibilities. More and more, he found himself writing about his hometown of Detroit and the people he knew there. Before long, his work started to appear in various literary magazines and journals including *The North American Review, Beloit Fiction Journal, The Literary Review, American Short Fiction,* and the *European journals Panurge and Paris Transcontinental*.

Michael Zadoorian's first novel, SECOND HAND (W.W. Norton), about a Detroit-area junk store owner was released in 2000. The New York Times Book Review wrote SECOND HAND "may be a gift from the (Tiki) gods" and called it "a romantic adventure that explores what Yeats called 'the foul rag and bone shop of the heart.'" SECOND HAND was selected for Barnes & Noble's Discover Great New Writers Program and as an American Booksellers Association "Book Sense" pick; it also received the Great Lakes Colleges Association prestigious New Writers Award. Recently translated into Italian and French, it continues to be a cult favorite, still popping up on blogs and "favorite book" lists.

Zadoorian's second and most recent novel THE LEISURE SEEKER has already garnered rave reviews from all over the world. In a starred review, Booklist wrote "THE LEISURE SEEKER is pretty much like life itself: joyous, painful, moving, tragic, mysterious, and not to be missed." The L.A. Times said: Zadoorian is true to these geezers. He draws them in their most honest light. I hoped for a book that would make me laugh during these tight times, and I was rewarded." And the *Sydney Morning Herald* stated: "This is a sad, sweet love

letter to a fading America, elevated beyond its simple premise by its sharp humour about aging and a quietly shocking ending...it's hard to think of a more purely likeable novel in recent times."

His short story collection *The Lost Tiki Palaces of Detroit* (Wayne State University Press) follows characters coming to terms with the past and the present in a broken city. "These are stories that grab you, shake you and slap you upside the head...working toward perfection in short-story form." (*Lansing State Journal*)

Zadoorian still works as a copywriter in the Detroit area. He has also worked as a journalist, a magazine feature writer, a voice over talent, a shipping room clerk, and a plant guard for Chrysler. He lives with his wife in an old house filled with things that used to be in the houses of other people.

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