



The Short Bus: A Journey Beyond Normal

Jonathan Mooney

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A young man once called unteachable journeys across America to investigate the lives of those, like himself, who are forced to create new ways of living in order to survive

Labeled "dyslexic and profoundly learning disabled with attention and behavior problems," Jonathan Mooney was a short bus rider—a derogatory term used for kids in special education and a distinction that told the world he wasn't "normal." Along with other kids with special challenges, he grew up hearing himself denigrated daily. Ultimately, Mooney surprised skeptics by graduating with honors from Brown University. But he could never escape his past, so he hit the road. To free himself and to learn how others had moved beyond labels, he created an epic journey. He would buy his own short bus and set out cross-country, looking for kids who had dreamed up magical, beautiful ways to overcome the obstacles that separated them from the so-called normal world.

In *The Short Bus*, his humorous, irreverent, and poignant record of this odyssey, Mooney describes his four-month, 35,000-mile journey across borders that most people never see. He meets thirteen people in thirteen states, including an eight-year-old deaf and blind girl who likes to curse out her teachers in sign language. Then there's Butch Anthony, who grew up severely learning disabled but who is now the proud owner of the Museum of Wonder. These people teach Mooney that there's no such thing as normal and that to really live, every person must find their own special ways of keeping on. *The Short Bus* is a unique gem, propelled by Mooney's heart, humor, and outrageous rebellions.

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