

Far as the Eye Can See

Robert Bausch

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Bobby Hale is a Union veteran several times over. After the war, he sets his sights on California, but only makes it to Montana. As he stumbles around the West, from the Wyoming Territory to the Black Hills of the Dakotas, he finds meaning in the people he meets-settlers and native people-and the violent history he both participates in and witnesses. *Far as the Eye Can See* is the story of life in a place where every minute is an engagement in a kind of war of survival, and how two people-a white man and a mixed-race woman-in the midst of such majesty and violence can manage to find a pathway to their own humanity.

Robert Bausch is the distinguished author of a body of work that is lively and varied, but linked by a thoughtfully complicated masculinity and an uncommon empathy. The unique voice of Bobby Hale manages to evoke both Cormac McCarthy and Mark Twain, guiding readers into Indian country and the Plains Wars in a manner both historically true and contemporarily relevant, as thoughts of race and war occupy the national psyche.

Far as the Eye Can See Details


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Sharon Powers says

Book Review by: Sharon Powers.

NOTE: If you would like to view the book review in its entirety with all the graphics I have added, check it out on my blog, Sharon's Love of Books, at: <http://sharonsloveofbooks.blogspot.com/>

A man stands in the midst of boulders and peers out across the terrain. His eye follows the trail stretching out before him, out across the landscape for as far as his eye can see. The vast spaces meet distant mountains, rolling clouds of purples and blues fading into the distance so far that it is difficult to see where the land begins and the sky ends.

Trying to stay cool in the meager shade of the boulder, sweat soaks his shirt as he considers his lame horse standing next to him. He sees someone far down the path moving in his direction. Whether Indian or soldier, he knows they spell trouble for him. He waits as the other approaches and realizes the fellow is either hiding or sneaking up on him.

He pulls out his carbine and climbs the boulder, scouring the landscape, trying to spot the guy. Finally, he sees him wiggling his way among the bushes towards his position. It's an Indian. Carefully, he takes aim and fires.

We've all heard descriptions of the wide open spaces of the west. Colors so incredible and spaces so vast that it dwarfed all life. Our protagonist in the book, Far As The Eye Can See, feels the wonder of the panorama before him all the while trying to protect himself from the Indian that approaches. But, before we continue with our protagonist, Bobby Hale, let's take a quick look at the synopsis of the book.

SHORT BOOK SYNOPSIS:

Bobby Hale tells us he has enlisted as a Union soldier...quite a number of times, collecting enlistment bonuses each time. Of course, each time with a different name. At the end of the Civil War he sets out towards California. Joining a small wagon train he gets as far as Montana. Hale traps for a while, meandering from Montana to Wyoming Territory, and over to the Black Hills of the Dakotas.

He meets settlers on the wagon train, making friends and gaining the acquaintance of some who will be future enemies. Hale is a mountain man for a while, riding with an Indian who becomes his friend. He works as a trapper and hires himself out as a scout to the soldiers at a fort, and he kills Indians. He witnesses and is a part of the violence of the West, both killing and struggling to survive. But in the end, what Hale searches for is a place in the wide-open spaces--a place to live in peace.

Far as the Eye Can See is not only Bobby Hale's story, it is the story about a place in time. A place for which life must fight if it is to be kept. A place where two people, a white Civil War veteran and a mixed-race woman, seek to find the path to their own humanity. Bobby Hale leads the reader (almost like our own personal scout) through his time in Indian country and among battles of the Plains Wars; he leads us to where life is an obsession over race and survival.

FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE--WHAT I THINK ABOUT THIS BOOK:

FIRST: Robert Bausch's writing style is eminently readable. Sentences are simple, but not overly plain--no complex structures either, but just an easy-going, straight-forward style that suits the story. Dialog is realistic

and not overblown.

Nor do we have, here, as I've seen in other western or regional novels, language that is "corrupted" in order to give it a unique flavor [i.e. "nuf said!" (enough said) or "cum un" (come on)]. The writing style evokes an easy-going gait of a horse walking, or perhaps the steady rolling of wagon wheels. I did NOT say boring. Bausch's style literally evokes the wide-open country and pacing of life in the wild places.

SECOND: Everything Bausch does with this novel fills the pages with realism and an authentic life, bringing the people, places, and time into a believable reality. Even before I got to the author's notes at the end of the book, where Bausch tells us about his efforts at constructing a realistic and authentic period, it was clear that he knew what he was about as he wrote this novel.

The smells jump off the page, the sounds of battle rang in my ears, the cold of the mountain winters permeated my bones, sweat dripping into the eyes, and skin, baked by the heat of a summer sun. Bausch's detailing of the Evans Repeating Rifle and how it loads is beautiful. Even colloquialisms are well-done; for example, how Bobby Hale asks Ink if she speaks "American," and Ink tells him she speaks "English."

THIRD: and for me, the most important part of the book is the major premise of the book and its accompanying themes. Robert Bausch tells a vibrant story about the progress of the way west (in the locations I listed, above) from the time of the Civil War. It is a huge story about not only the migration of peoples from the East, but the complex interaction of the relationships among Indians, Settlers, trappers and traders, local militia, and the Government's agents (Soldiers, scouts, Indian Agents etc.).

Connected to this third point, is the story of how far, as the title implies, the eye can see. Looking at the title literally, *Far as the Eye Can See*, simply means that in viewing the expanse of sky and land it seems to go on forever. Here, it also means the kind of seeing we do with our inner eyes--how we perceive the world and other people and situations. Sometimes our own vested interests cause us to wear blinders that limit our vision. Consequently, our limited vision may cause us to make harsh judgments of other people based on their skin color or culture. Bobby Hale, for example, thought he saw an Indian brave, but who did he really shoot? Well...not an Indian brave.

The early vignette of Bobby Hale shooting the Indian makes for a wonderful metaphor for the blindness of the collective racial and cultural stereotyping of the Indian nations by a burgeoning, mostly white, American people. The people of this time could only--as far as their eyes could see--view the Indian as a savage. The beauty of Bausch's book is that he doesn't fall into making the white man or the Indian heroes or villains--he creates his characters simply to be "human beings," fraught with failings as well as strengths.

What Robert Bausch does, here, in dealing with the clash of the two disparate cultures, is quite elegant. He uses this clash to show us people, not caricatures. Bobby Hale is not the hero we hoped he would be in the opening pages of the book. Bobby Hale looks to survive.

Even though Hale defrauded the U.S. Government and killed Indians, it turns out his best friend is Big Tree, an Indian. And when he was really needed by (two unnamed) characters he chose to help them, and in doing so was the hero we longed for earlier in the book. Robert Bausch's writing of Hale (and others) into existence as complex characters doesn't leave the story muddled. We get believable, characters in a realistic setting acting exactly the way real human beings act--making poor decisions in one setting and heroic ones in another. Just beautiful.

MY RECOMMENDATIONS AND RATING FOR THIS BOOK:

The genre, western, is generally considered acceptable for all reading audiences. However, taken individually, some westerns should not be read by the young or those people sensitive to violence. Such is the case with *Far as the Eye Can See*. Bausch does a great job keeping swearing out of the book, as he does with explicit sex scenes. A brutal rape occurs in the book, but it is not explicitly shown, only the results.

Likewise, violence is also in the book, and for a few occasions, quite graphically; this includes some scenes of torture or descriptions of the results of torture or murder. That having been said, I would wholeheartedly approve of mature adults reading this book; the violence contained is not gratuitous, but is incorporated into the story, contributing to it as an integral and necessary part of the whole.

For all the reasons I gave you, above, I rate this book 5 stars out of 5. It is a wonderful read that I enjoyed, immensely. I would recommend this book to the appropriate audience. Today, for the book, *Far as the Eye Can See*, I'm using 5 cups of coffee, in lieu of stars, in honor of the campfire coffee the characters drank.

Thank you for joining me, today, as we got an advance look at a wonderful new western novel by Robert Bausch. Due to be released November 4, 2014, you should preorder your copy, now. Please join me next week as I will be reviewing for you Esther Ehrlich's debut novel, *Nest*. This children's novel looks promising, and I can hardly wait to review it for you. So, until next week when we get to find out about, *Nest*, read something pleasurable for yourself--have a little fun. God bless you, and take care, my friends.

Until next time...

...many happy pages of reading!

Sharon.

Margaret says

I never thought I would live to see myself starting to enjoy westerns. My mother was an avid western lover and Zane Grey was her favorite author, I feel like I am following her footsteps especially after reading this book. The start was intriguing and I immediately was drawn in but I wondered if I would lose interest because the storyline left the original premise and suddenly we took a huge leap back into the main character's past which span several years. I found myself getting deeply involved in the storyline and I had to trust that the original story would be revisited and I was correct.

I loved the fact that the author did his research and brought the historical events to life. The violence from both sides was appalling and yet the sadness of the plight and demise of the way of life of the Native American was highlighted, at least it was for me. Aside from the sadness and violence, I enjoyed the human touch in the book.

Harold Titus says

Robert Bausch's first person narrated "*Far as the Eye Can See*" is the best historical novel that I have read

this year. It is instructive about hostile relations between Native American tribes and whites (and, especially, the U.S. Army) in the West during the 1870s, it is character driven with important romantic elements, it is an adventure story -- I was to the very end of the novel concerned about the protagonist's fate -- and it is philosophical.

Bausch's protagonist is a twenty-nine year old man that calls himself Bobby Hale. We are told that much of Hale's childhood was devoid of affection. His mother died of cholera when he was nine. His father abandoned him immediately thereafter. He was raised in Philadelphia by a spinster aunt, who "never once looked upon me with anything but impatience and disparagement." During the Civil War he joined the Union army seven times to collect enlistment bounties: each time joining, collecting his bonus, deserting, moving to a different Northern city, changing his name and enlisting. Near the War's end, not able to desert, he experienced fierce combat. "I seen men dropping next to me in rows like something cut down by a thresher in a wheat field." After the War he stayed in the Richmond, Virginia, area for four years working menial jobs but dreaming vaguely of living a free life in the Far West "where land was there for any fellow with the nerve to stake it out and call it his." Eventually, he bought a horse, a 32-cartridge repeating carbine, and other essential equipment and accompanied a wagon train out of St. Louis headed for Oregon. All of this is important for us to know prior to the first major event that Hale narrates.

"Far as the Eye Can See" opens with a prologue. Hale has done something not yet revealed that has caused him to abandon his job of scout for the army, whose mission is to find and collect all of the Indian tribes in the Yellowstone River area and move them to specific areas near specified forts. The act that Hale has committed has him believing that both soldiers and Indians have good reason to track and kill him. Traveling hastily toward Bozeman, Montana, he discovers that he is being followed. Hiding behind an outcropping of large boulders, he sees what appears to be an Indian crawling through underbrush seemingly intent on attacking him unawares. He wounds the Indian and discovers the person is a young woman. The shot has ripped a shallow tear across her abdomen. She tells him that she is a half breed, has escaped from a Sioux village, and is fearful that her Indian husband is tracking her to kill her. Hale treats her wound and they leave, together, determined to find a distant sanctuary.

The novel now backtracks to Hale's experiences prior to his meeting "Ink," the half-Indian, half-white woman. We read of Hale's adventures of being a part of the wagon train headed out of St. Louis. We meet several white characters possessing varying degrees of bad character. (They reappear later in the novel) We meet also two individuals who will influence positively Hale's evolving character. One is Theo, the wagon train leader, wise of the shortcomings of mankind, of life on the trail, and of Indian values and behavior. The other is Big Tree, Theo's wagon master, a six and a half foot massive Crow. Both men believe that when Indians and white men interact more often than not it is the white man who is the savage.

Theo, Hale, Big Tree, and several other members of the train ride out ahead of the wagons. Indians suddenly appear. Surrounded by a party of galloping, yipping Sioux braves, not understanding that individual braves are taking "coup" -- touching the tops of white men's heads with the tips of their lances not to kill but to enhance their reputation for courage and to make good medicine -- Hale shoots one of them. Theo is disgusted. He must now prepare the wagon train for certain attack. He tells Hale, "But the truth is, we went into Indian country and murdered a brave. That's what we done. There ain't no other way to look at it." Big Tree's assessment of whites, expressed after a later incident, is "Wasichus [white men] kill for gladness."

Theo stops the wagon train at Bozeman and nearby Fort Ellis to wait out the winter. Deciding to reside permanently in Bozeman, he urges Hale to lead the train to Oregon in the spring. Hale refuses to take the responsibility. Theo then recommends that Hale accompany Big Tree on a winter hunting, trapping expedition through the wild lands of the eastern Rocky Mountains. Hale and Big Tree do this for seven

years. What Hale learns about Indian life from Big Tree and from his experiences is the second major section of the novel.

When Big Tree and Hale eventually part, Hale returns to Bozeman. In route, he overtakes a wagon owned by two white women whose husbands, missing for more than a year, are presumed to be dead. He helps them reach Bozeman. During this third major section of the novel we observe an evolving relationship between Hale and one of the women that tests Hale's reluctance to make commitments. Hale eventually promises to escort the two women to Oregon in the spring. He chooses in the meantime to scout for the army because it will provide him an income and warm shelter when he is not on the trail. Hale witnesses firsthand the intractable thinking of the officer class regarding "the Indian problem." We experience the incident that causes Hale to flee and, eventually, to wound the half-breed girl called Ink. The final section of the novel depicts the dangers he faces and the extent to which he is willing to accept the obligations he feels he must honor regarding the women in Bozeman and Ink's safety and future.

What interested me most in the novel was Hale's journey toward commitment to others. Because of his experiences, he has, justifiably, a harsh opinion of mankind. At one point in the novel, he and other wagon train members witness a bald eagle seize a puppy and carry it to its nest. The puppy, observing the humans below, wags its tail, then whimpers, then commences to howl. The train moves on. We do not need to be told the puppy's fate. Hale comments: "I couldn't help but think that maybe we're all a little bit like that dog. We occupy our little space of earth and wait for the damn bird to strike."

There is so much viciousness that he witnesses, so much stupidity, so much hatred. Life daily is "strife and struggle." Awaking each morning, he must "look for trouble again." He wants to believe that there is goodness for him, goodness for any man. Thinking of the two women that he had left in Bozeman, he muses: "It's a tragic kind of world we find ourselves in, all the time looking for some way to have what we want, hoping for nothing but a reason to hope." And, "we don't know all the time what is taken away and what is given. Sometimes we know what we have been given only when it's been lost." In the novel's final chapter he reflects that people talk of living in peace, of not wanting to go to war, of not wanting to kill or be killed. But these, he decides, are just words. "We're all lying to ourselves and everybody else. ... Something way down inside of me feels like it's dripping and damp and completely evil. I know I am a animal that can talk and there ain't nothing that will ever save me or no one else." But, like every human, he has innate needs. Not like every human being he can be empathetic. Ink recognizes his goodness. The final five pages of the novel reveal whether or not he is strong enough to utilize it and whether or not the malevolence of others will eliminate the opportunity.

Jan says

This was different than I thought it would be after reading the review - not in a bad way though. I think I thought it was going to be a sort of Annie Dillard type of story but it turned out to be more of a Robert Olmsted type. (I love both.)

I liked the way Bausch didn't romanticize either the white peoples' westward migration or the native Americans.

If anyone reads this book, I hope they will take the time to read the "acknowledgements" at the end. In fact, even if you don't read the book the acknowledgements pages are well worth reading!

Manray9 says

Robert Bausch's *Far as the Eye Can See* is weak historical fiction. It is larded with historical inaccuracies, as well as a noteworthy deafness for mid-nineteenth century American language and vocabulary. The phony vernacular in the novel's beginning, which recedes as the story progresses, is particularly off-putting. Bausch left few clichés of the Western genre untouched – the cruel white man, the noble savage, the callous government and so on. One Star is all it rated with me. My recommendation: don't bother.

Allison Hiltz says

There are times when I read outside of my comfort zone and it goes horribly wrong, but then there times that it goes incredibly well and makes it worth my while. *Far As the Eye Can See* by Robert Bausch was one of the times it was well worth it and I may have to reconsider my feelings about westerns. Although this may not be a western in the traditional sense of the genre's definition, the book takes place in the midwest during a time of struggle and follows a man throughout his journey, both physically and emotionally.

At its core, *Far As the Eye Can See* is the story of Bobby Hale, a former Union soldier who was known for gaming the system but is too sincere to be considered a conman. After the war, he heads west (as many did at the time) in an effort to live a better life, only to be left wandering the middle of the country and learning about himself in the process. He is both friend and foe to the Native Americans he encounters – at times he is tracking them in order to round them up or kill them, while at other times he finds safety with them. It's the story of a man who wants to do right by the very culture he is out to destroy, his coming to terms with his own past, and charting a new path for his future.

I usually have trouble with narrations that are written in any given dialect, but the southern dialect of Bobby Hale didn't bother me in the least. Bausch writes him in such a way that his naivety is charming rather than annoying and while I had trouble with some of his actions, I found myself rooting for him, nonetheless. There's a bit of romance, a good bit of action, and a lot of history rolled into this book, but the end result is story that's impossible to put down and a protagonist you want to overcome the odds stacked against him. With each person he encounters along his way, Hale learns something new about himself, which lends a redeeming quality that I wasn't expecting.

For the full review, visit [The Book Wheel](#).

Stephen Davenport says

This is a compelling, suspenseful historical novel. On one level it is an adventure story: will the hero survive. On another, it is a haunting story of the injustice the USA perpetuated on Native Americans and on another, a nostalgia for the western wilderness.

Angela M says

You never get to really know anyone else in this novel very much because they seem to come and go through

Bobby Hale's travels or maybe it's Bobby who is coming and going through their lives. There are Native Americans from various tribes, militia men, wagon trains with settlers, gold diggers and more. I had a hard time getting into this at first, even though I liked the writing. There are some beautiful descriptive passages. Here is just one of them:

"You notice the sky out here. And land so far in front and next to you and behind you – as far as the eye can see. Hills and ravines, mountains and long empty prairies, forests that give way to long, deeply green fields of wild grass. Rivers that run down between draws and meet at the tip of the great divides of land; rocks that seem to reach all the way to the sky. You can feel so alone, though."

But then at some point I found myself invested in Bobby Hale's journey but it was not just the journey in this wild, wide open country, it was his journey to find himself. It's the time right after the civil war and Bobby Hale has been in and out of the union army a number of times. You might say he's a deserter but he'll tell you that he actually fought in some major battles. Without family or ties, he decides to make his way across the country to California.

Along the way there is more violence and death than I wanted to read about, but yet it feels as if the author got the history right as Bobby moved from place to place with a slew of characters that in many ways shape the man that Bobby Hale becomes. He's young and yes flawed, but somehow figures out the right thing to do. 3 stars - maybe 3.5 now that I have thought about it a while, I liked Bobby Hale.

I did not previously know of this author and have discovered that he had written several other novels that I plan to check out.

Thanks to Bloomsbury USA and NetGalley.

Shelby *trains flying monkeys* says

Bobby Hale. Who would have thought a character with no real plan would sneak up and capture my attention so very much?

Bobby has deserted the army several times. It's just not his cup of tea. He decides to head out west. He plans on a destination of California but Bobby tends to ramble around. He takes up with a wagon train for awhile and then when they decide to stay he goes off with a Native American friend for several years of trapping. That sounds boring doesn't it?

It's not.

This author does an amazing job of bringing this time to life. I was fully prepared to not like this book. My mind was changed very quickly once I got into the book. The descriptions of the land, the people and even the food sweep you into this book.

Bobby becomes a favorite character of mine as this book goes along. I hate to give too much of the book away, because I want people to read it.

This period in our history is one that always breaks my heart when I think about it. The book handles the conflict well between the whites and Native Americans. It shows the good and bad on both sides. However, this book doesn't fit in the typical western book genre. So if you are like me and don't really care much for that type of book you can give this one a go and still be very happy.

I received an arc copy of this book from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

Diane S ? says

Bobby Hale was a Union soldier many times over. Joining under different names to get the joining bonus, though he does end of participating in two horrendous battles. Wanting to make it to California, circumstances and misfortunes see him get only so far and no further.

What a fascinating character he turns out to be, a somewhat of a reluctant hero after a few missteps. This is a time when settlers are moving west, to Oregon and California, a time of great Indian hostilities and the armies attempt to corral all Indians into one confined space. A time when gold has been discovered in the Black Hills and many want to go and become rich. Renegade generals and Indian scouts attempting to solve the Indian problem, as they see it.

I became deeply invested in the history of this time and all the characters surrounding Bobby. It was interesting to see how all these characters helped Bobby grown as a person and become a survivor. When he inadvertently shoots a young half Indian girl who is running from her Indian husband, his life changes again. Trying to get back to the fort and safety he ends up witnessing the Battle of Big Horn.

A fascinating read of the old west with a very likable narrator telling us his story.

ARC from NetGalley.

Jane says

I wrote the following Facebook post on the page of Robert Bausch, who taught me college English at Northern Virginia Community College almost 40 years ago. I was taking preliminary courses at the community college level before enrolling in George Mason University's nursing program.

Mr. Bausch, a budding author at the time, has gone on to become a highly respected author and winner of several writing awards. Despite his successful career as an author, he still continues to teach at the local level. He made a big impression on me at that time and gave me confidence in my very rudimentary writing skills.

@ Robert Bausch: "I just finished reading Far as the Eye Can See. I loved it. You made Bobby McHale very real through the use of his first person narrative. I had never given much thought to the idea of the lone traveler, wandering that vast territory and fending for himself. The details of his ordeal to find his next meal, cook it, and find shelter served as an eye-opener to one who just has to run to the nearest Safeway. The loneliness and isolation must have been intense. Your notes in Acknowledgements about the lives of the Plains Indians and the Europeans who came to fulfill their destiny of conquering the West made me very sad.

This is from one of your students....to one of my favorite teachers."

I received a reply informing me that he is writing a sequel to this lovely book. I eagerly look forward to its publication.

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Alex says

This is a beautifully written odyssey. It tells the tale of Bobby Gale (that's not his real name but the one he likes to use), an ex Union soldier in the Civil War who has been deeply scarred by the heinous acts he witnessed. This is his journey to peace, a sense of purpose and mostly, his search for a place to fit in.

The story starts with him shooting a young half breed Indian woman. The story then goes into flashback describing his journey to that event. This involves him joining a wagon train bound for California. Here he meets a wonderfully drawn cast of Indians, Indian hunters, "refugees" from the decade old Civil War, all searching for a better life.

The story is told in the first person of Bobby, a brilliant "naive" voice who sheds wisdom and simplicity in equal order. I can't recommend this highly enough for it's humanity amidst the violent and turbulent American West.

Richard says

Written in the first person, and narrated by Civil War veteran Bobby Hale in a charming and authentic vernacular, "Far as the Eye Can See," is a rip-snorter of an oater. In this world, someone is always out to kill you, kindness is not necessarily rewarded, love comes hard, the Indian wars rage, and in the face of it all it's hard to stay human. Bobby Hale maintains his humanity even as all the forces conspire.

Over the years I've grown quite fond of the Western genre, actually, since Lonesome Dove and Larry McMurtry's noble attempt to de-mythologize the old west. Of course what he really did was re-mythologize the old west, and "Far as the Eye Can See," falls right into that category. That's fine. Only Cormac McCarthy really drives stakes into the myths, and his ultra-violent, extraordinarily written worlds are best taken in small doses. This book, though brutal enough, is not brutal in the extreme, and is filled with characters lovable and despicable who are doing their best to get somewhere, and stay alive. It's a fine read.

Randy says

Robert Bausch gives us a novel that sprawls across the west, covering from a few years after the Civil War until the Custer massacre in 1876.

We follow young Bobby Hale, a Virginian and a veteran, that headed west to find out what lay out there. Hale is not his real name, just the latest.

The story covers Hale's time with a wagon train, his five year partnership with the Crow Big Tree where he learns trapping and how to live to hooking up with a pair of women, sisters, headed west. He serves as scout sent out looking for Indians, hooks up with Ink, the young half breed Nez Perce woman, shooting her then nursing her back to health, and finally ending up stuck in the middle of the Big Horn battle.

Told in the first person, author Robert Bausch is consistent in his depiction of Hale as a man with little formal education, his use of the wrong tense quite regular, his unfamiliarity with how to deal with common things, and his quick reaction, oftentimes wrong.

Quite enjoyed this one.

Jason Schneeberger says

I decided to make it a point to read a lot of different books this year, from genres that I have never delved into before. That brought me to this book, FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE. A western... but before you pass on reading this review any further, let me say, it's much more than a "shoot'em up cowboy" romp.

This is a story set in the last half of the 1800's, when the west was wild and a very dangerous place to roam. Bobby Hale is an ex vet of the Union and several wars and decides that he wants to take off from Virginia so he sets his sites on California. Armed with two guns and his trusty horse, Cricket, Bobby runs into all kinds of characters along the way, learning about America and himself as he roams wherever the adventures take him. The story, while fictional, weaves some real history into it along the way, like The Battle of Little Bighorn.

I was so impressed with this book! The descriptions of the old time west were spectacular and the interactions that Bobby has on his journey, from army generals to an array of Indians, really speaks volumes about human nature, and the human condition as a wide spectrum of soft compassion to heartless violence is met on his journeys through this book. Bobby is a roamer, a content drifter looking for something that even he isn't quite sure of and we as readers are along for the ride.

The prose of this book is written in the language of the time, from the first person narrative of the central character of Bobby, so there are plenty of "we's" were there should "were's", along with enough "hissel's" and "ain't's" to send an English teacher into reprimanding fits. It's perfect for the book and adds to the authenticity.

If you're in for a book that is set in the past, but still relevant for the current times in its themes of race, war, and human compassion , FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE is the perfect book to read! I give this book a 5/5!
