



And Then the Vulture Eats You

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The best writers in the sport of running take up a fascinating subject, the last frontier of long-distance events: races longer than a marathon .

Who runs these 50-milers, 100-milers, multi-day events, multi-event events? And why do they do it? And (okay, admit you're a little curious) what's it like to do one?

James Shapiro, a long time ultra-runner, whose *Meditations from the Breakdown Lane* is a classic piece of running literature, begins by relating with heart-rending detail his experiences in a 6-Day Race in Swifts on the Wing.

In *To the Limit and Beyond*, Kenny Moore takes you through a gut-wrenching experience in his first-person account of the Great Hawaiian Footrace, a horrendous 6-day ordeal that seemingly changes his life .

Don Kardong, one of the wittiest and most personable writers in the sport, in *Le Grizz* goes the 50-mile distance at the infamous race that gives this piece its name. Along the way this former Olympic marathoner, like so many participants in these events, makes startling discoveries about himself. Ed Ayres, editor of *Running Times*, takes on the Western States 100 in *Wings of Icarus*, and the event turns out to be a kind of catharsis in his life.

In *Road Warriors*, Hal Higdon's report on his group's informal attempt to run across the state of Indiana is another kind of ultra tale: a light-hearted, self-imposed challenge that turns, like most ultra events, into a revealing spiritual odyssey.

Tom Hart's self-imposed challenge, to run a solo 37-miler on his 37th birthday, is the basis for his ultra story. He finds out, as do the others, that an effort on the magnitude of an ultra is more than a feat of endurance, it is a journey into self .

John Parker ends with *And Then the Vulture Eats You*, an uproarious analysis of today's ultra runners (Mystic Ultras). Your sides will ache from reading his account of the war between the Track Men and the Mystic Ultras in the Jackson, Michigan Ultimate Runner contest, in which the entrants race a 10K, a 440, a mile, a 100-yd dash, a mile, and a marathon, all in the same day .

If you are an ultra runner, have ever been even mildly curious about such events, or if you are just a lover of great writing, you will greatly enjoy this book.

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