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## Personal Record

### A Love Affair with Running

By Rachel Toor

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October 2008

182 pages | 5 ½ x 8 ½

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#### Book Synopsis:

A collection of personal stories about running and an examination of the culture surrounding the sport.



University of Nebraska Press

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## Book Description

Rachel Toor was a bookish egghead who ran only to catch a bus. How such an unlikely athlete became a runner of ultramarathons is the story of *Personal Record*, an exhilarating meditation on the making and the minutiae, of a runner's life. The food, the clothes, the races, the injuries, the watch (and Toor loves her watch) are all essential to the runner, as readers discover here, and discover why.

A chronicle of Toor's relationship with the sport of running, from her early incarnation as an Oreo-eating couch potato to her emergence as a hard-bodied marathoner, this book explores the sport of running, the community it brings into being, and the personal satisfaction of pursuing it to its limit. Alternating with Toor's account of becoming a runner are the stories—meditations, examinations, celebrations—of how runners become a pack. An homage to running, a literary take on how an activity can turn into a passion, and how a passion can become a way of life, this book runs all the way from individual achievement—a personal record—to the world of friendship and belonging, the community that runners inevitably find.

## Pre-Publication Praise for *Personal Record*

“Until I read Rachel Toor's marvelous book *Personal Record*, I never understood the great passion of long-distance runners. She takes you on a grand tour of the running life, which goes from hobby to one of the purest forms that fanaticism in sport can take—ultramarathons. As any great running book deserves, Rachel Toor's writing is swift, disciplined, sinewy, and indomitably strong. It is also hilarious. The story she tells is a marvel.”—Pat Conroy, author of *My Losing Season* and *The Prince of Tides*

“In an unconventional, inspirational, and loving account of running, really well done and funny as heck, Rachel Toor shows how this simple activity is so powerful it sweeps us off our feet into friendships that endure. I'm a fan.”—Bill Rodgers, four-time winner of both the Boston Marathon and the New York City Marathon and owner of the Bill Rodgers Running Center

“How do I love thee, running? Let Rachel Toor count the ways—over land, with her body, alongside horses, with her closest friends—the endless, wonderful ways.”—Kathrine Switzer, first woman to run the Boston Marathon and author of *Marathon Woman*

“In this gem of a book, Rachel Toor shares her thoughts and emotions as she tiptoes, trots, and eventually races into the quirky world of running. Toor's journey is a personal adventure, intimate and sometimes confessional, and runners of all abilities will enjoy traveling along with her.”—Don Kardong, former Olympic marathoner and *Runner's World* senior writer

“Rachel Toor is very brave, as a runner and as a writer. She sees things down at the cellular level and doesn't hesitate to tell you Difficult Truths. And, if it weren't for the fact that she confesses to breaking down and crying every so often, you might even think it was easy.”—John L. Parker, author of *Once a Runner* and *Again to Carthage*

“I couldn't put it down. It's insightful-funny, and passionately real and personal.”—Bernd Heinrich, author of *Why We Run: A Natural History*

“If you believe that there are 60 seconds in the unforgiving minute, then believe me as much as you do your stopwatch when I say, you'll enjoy Rachel's story as much as you do a perfectly paced tempo run.”  
—Roy Benson, author of *Coach Benson's Secret Workouts* and senior writer for *Running Times*



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## Post-Publication Praise

Please visit this book's [Web page](http://www.nebraskapress.unl.edu/product/Personal-Record,673436.aspx) (http://www.nebraskapress.unl.edu/product/Personal-Record,673436.aspx) for the most current post-publication praise.

## Author's Previous Praise

### Praise for Rachel Toor's *The Pig and I*

“Beautifully written . . . Any woman who’s ever loved a pet (or ten) will love Toor’s memoir.”— *San Francisco Chronicle*

“An entertaining, moving read. . . . Even if you are not an animal lover (what is wrong with you that you’re not?), this book will be of interest.”—*The Los Angeles Times*

## Author Biography



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**Rachel Toor's** ambition, on graduating from Yale University, was to work on a dude ranch in Wyoming (never having been to a dude ranch—or to Wyoming). Moving to Missoula, Montana, for an MFA in creative writing is the closest she's come. After a dozen years as an editor of scholarly books at Oxford and Duke University Presses, she slid down the ladder of social mobility and did a stint in college admissions, quitting to write *Admissions Confidential: An Insider's Account of the Elite College Selection Process* (St. Martin's, 2001) in an attempt to demystify an arcane and brutalizing rite of passage. Her most recent book is *The Pig and I: How I Learned to Love Men (Almost) As Much as I Love My Pets* (Penguin, 2005.) Rachel has a monthly column in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and writes the “Finishing Kick” essay every other month in *Running Times* magazine, where she is a Senior Writer. Her work has appeared in *The LA Times*, *Glamour*, *Reader's Digest*, *Marathon&Beyond* and a variety of other more academically-oriented publications.

She is currently Assistant Professor of Creative Writing at the Inland Northwest Center for Writers in Spokane, the graduate writing program of Eastern Washington University.



## Additional Information

### Events

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