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At Home in the West: The Lure of Public Land

by William S. Sutton with a foreword by Toby Jurovics and an afterword by Susan B. Moldenhauer

Throughout the world, the West has defined the character of the United States of America as no other region in America ever could. The combination of aweinspiring topography and the integration of indigenous Indian cultures into the fabric of American life have long inspired citizens of the world to travel to and explore the vast lands that define the American West.

Photography helped to open up the West after the American Civil War by sharing views of nature unparalleled in any other place on Earth. And photography helped to jump-start the creation of a national park system at Yellowstone that is among America's greatest democratic ideals. It is no wonder that public lands have come to dominate the American West, from national parks and national forests to national grasslands and wildlife refuges, from national monuments and historical sites to wild and scenic rivers and other sanctuaries of wilderness.

Willy Sutton has spent much of the past thirty years getting out of his truck and into the landscape, taking his camera to places of natural wonder both well known and obscure. He has assembled one of the great photographic bodies of work dealing with the public lands of the American West, providing a glimpse of what these landscapes looked like before they became "national treasures." Thankfully, because of their preservation, these public lands are available to all citizens of the world today.

Whether one is visiting the West for the first time or has lived in the West for a lifetime, readers will find in Sutton's photographs a magisterial guide to what makes the West so unique, so special. As essayists Toby Jurovics and Susan B. Moldenhauer make plain, Willy Sutton's photographs will long be held in esteem, even in this modern age dominated by technology and urban development, social and economic inequality, and the imminent prospect of climate change. At Home in the West: Photographs of Public Land is a book for the ages.

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK



"Dramatic monochromes of public lands in the American West are almost automatically associated with artists like Timothy O'Sullivan or Ansel Adams. But there are equally talented contemporary photographers, and William Sutton is one of them. His evocative images of Western public lands range from close-ups of frothing mountain streams to vast, sweeping landscapes that seemingly cover as much territory as do small Eastern states. The wonderfully wrought plates in Sutton's book—imagery from 46 public lands in 13 Western states—are accompanied by a text that is as lively as it is thoughtful. The critical essays by Toby Jurovics and Susan Moldenhauer, both curators of major art museums, lend an interpretive depth to Sutton's text and images. This is a book that is not just the first of its kind. It is one in which we can immerse ourselves

for hours, letting our imaginations run as free as a desert wind or a mountain breeze." —John Logan Allen, Emeritus Professor of Geography, University of Wyoming, Honorary Life Member of the Western History Association, and Fellow of the Society for the History of Discoveries

"Here's a test: open this book and look at Willy Sutton's superb pictures and then try not to fall even more deeply in love with our magnificent western continent. I bet you can't. I couldn't. It made me want to grab some gear, hit the road, and see more of this magnificence first-hand." —William deBuys, author of A Great Aridness: Climate Change and the Future of the American Southwest and The Walk

"Sutton surveys the vast public lands of the West as they are, showing mountain peaks, saguaro forests, pictographs, and sand dunes, as well as roads, bison, people, fences, mining, and foresting. The signs of habitation and development neither mar nor overwhelm Sutton's West but rather lend a reassuring authenticity to his depiction of the place he calls home." —Rebecca Senf, Norton Family Curator of Photography, Center for Creative Photography and Phoenix Art Museum, and author of Reconstructing the View: The Grand Canyon Photographs of Mark Klett and Byron Wolfe

"Sutton's resonant photographs evoke the deep silence and seemingly endless spaces of the American West as it must have been 200—or 2,000—years ago. That sense of continuity offers reassurance in an era of constant, sometimes drastic, environmental change and gives us something to stand on as we shape the future of the places that belong to every one of us. At Home in the West is an important artistic contribution to the ongoing

conversation about our environmental attitudes, perceptions, and values." —Eric Paddock, Curator of Photography and Media Arts, Denver Art Museum, and author of *Belonging to the West*

"It is all too easy, when looking at photographs of Western landscapes created in glorious Kodachrome or, more recently, digital images, to forget what this place, the West, really looks like, what it actually is. Here, in William Sutton's striking black-and-white photography, is the reality of the West, where the softening hues so evident in the generic coffeetable book are stripped away to reveal a powerful landscape region. Here is not mere surface but the geology of the place, its very bone and sinew, where thrusting peaks and steep declivities, valleys and cliffs, and meadows and rangeland are revealed in





a kind of primordial way—a way that helps the reader understand the meaning of what really lies beyond the 100th meridian. Surely, William Sutton deserves all the praise he will receive for giving us a most unusual book that will find a place among other classics of Western landscape photography."—Charles E. Little, author of Discover America: The Smithsonian Book of the National Parks and Greenways for America

"At Home in the West is a compelling reexamination of the landscapes of emotion found in our public lands. With this work Sutton assumes the front rank of photographers exploring the meaning of place. What a terrific book!" —William E. Tydeman, Archivist and Former Director of the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University

"This remarkable visual survey of public lands by William Sutton reveals the vast and exquisite terrain across the United States that is available to anyone, citizen or visitor. Sutton's photographs—powerful, raw, and passionate though not always picturesque—emerge from a true place: the American West. The essays by Sutton and leading curators, in addition to the extensive notes on the public lands that are featured, only enhance the experience and knowledge of this artistic legacy. At Home in the West is a thoughtful, intelligent, and timely book that expresses well both the challenges and opportunities that these immense lands, entrusted to our collective care, offer to us all." —Karen Sinsheimer, Curator of Photography, Santa Barbara Museum of Art

"A sojourn is a passing fancy, a contemplative engagement that is in the here and now. William Sutton's lure of the land is a magical walk through public lands. At Home in the West could be the motto of the Bureau of Land Management as much as it is 'opportunity and challenge.' Therein lay the truth, as the photographs emerge with reverence for what once was or might still be."

—Peter Goin, Foundation Professor of Art, University of Nevada, Reno, and author of *Humanature* and co-author of Changing Mines in America

