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Places of Grace: The Natural Landscapes of the American Midwest

Gary Irving, Michal Strutin
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The Natural Landscapes of the American Midwest



PLACES *of* GRACE

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Essay by Michal Strutin

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Gary Irving, Michal Strutin : Places of Grace: The Natural Landscapes of the American Midwest before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Places of Grace: The Natural Landscapes of the American Midwest:

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This stunning collection of photographs uncovers the mystery and beauty of a part of the country that for most people is hidden in plain view. Places of Grace reveals both the physical splendour and the natural history of a ten-state region encompassing Illinois, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan. The Midwest is full of useful, productive lands, a breadbasket ideally suited to raising crops and livestock. There is another Midwest, however, marked by lands that historically have resisted human purposes: the dark swamp forests of the far north, Nebraska's arid Sand Hills, the rockbound Flint Hills of Kansas. Such lands as these, although difficult to

cultivate, are valuable in terms not calculable in units produced or metric tons shipped. Many have been preserved as national parks or wildlife refuges. All hold secrets for the careful observer: Above a twisted sandstone gorge, golden autumn leaves drift thickly over the floor of an Indiana hardwood forest, their crunch underfoot releasing crisp, earthy odours. A copper and gold tall grass prairie shimmers under the sun from horizon to horizon. In Michigan's Upper Peninsula, the se

"With Places of Grace, [Irving's] 1999 collection of color landscapes, Irving expands his geographic range as well as his artistry with the panoramic camera... What a lovely collaboration this book is. Like Irving's painterly panoramas, Strutin's essay creates beautiful images too: 'Along a mist-shrouded lake in northern Minnesota the dark figures of conifers lean over the water like crowds around a steamy cauldron.'" - Ginny Lee, Illinois Times "[Strutin and Grace] created a book that is as dramatic, graceful and serene as the landscape both so obviously love... Irving's photographs are the perfect image for Strutin's words. Each photo is Irving's collection is stunning in its own way... How rare to find words and pictures that match each other in level of excellence- a combination that works to fire one's imagination." - Joanne Zerkel, The Star "Irving's photographs capture the diversity of Midwestern landscapes - from colorful autumn leaves in Ohio to the grass prairies of Iowa; from the dunes of Michigan to the rapids of Wisconsin; from the flowering dogwoods of southern Illinois to the sandhills of Nebraska." - Ralph Loos, The State Journal-Register "Reveals, page by page, the beauty and wonder of the Midwest, from its flat and haunting prairies to cool and shaded glades. If you're a Midwesterner, you will be grateful for the book's understanding of the beauty of your home, if not, your eyes will be opened." - Where St. Louis "The remarkable photographic skills of Gary Irving are strikingly displayed in Places of Grace... Rather than the grand vistas of America's western states, the beauty of ... [the midwestern states] is more intimate, more alluring: leafy forest rooms, shimmering mist-draped lakes, grass-edged sand dune paths, precipices of rock formed by glaciers. The book's opening is a thoughtful natural history of the region by Michal Strutin." - Shelby Paxton, Delta Sky Magazine "Unlocking the great variety of landscape that exists just beyond the edges of the highways I traveled, [Irving and Strutin] explore in both words and images the hidden places... It is difficult to say which is more stirring - Strutin's elegant prose, or Irving's inspiring photographs. In the end it doesn't matter. For what they leave me is a landscape of long-swirling grasses, leaf-tangled streams, imposing bluffs, and darkly reflective lakes, a sublime solitude in which even Wordsworth would have felt at home." - Virginia Quarterly "A beautiful book. Neatly balanced between a well-written text that explores the varieties of midwestern landscapes and an impressive array of stunning color photographs, Places of Grace presents the terrain of the central United States with an unusual range and sensitivity... Irving's photographs are the crowning glory of this book. Not unlike the spectacular scenes made famous by Eliot Porter, they are visual symphonies of color and natural phenomena, each offering a metaphorical journey into another world. Often literally glowing with atmosphere, they present everything from quiet bogs and early spring woodlands to sweeping vistas from bluffs and prairie rises." - Joni L. Kinsey, The Annals of Iowa
From the Back Cover This collection of photographs uncovers the mystery and beauty of a part of the country that for most people is hidden in plain view, Places of Grace reveals both the physical splendor and the natural history of a ten-state region encompassing Illinois, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan. Open Places of Grace and be guided through forest, wetland, and prairie into the heart of the undiscovered Midwest. From the prairie grasses of western Nebraska to the boreal forests of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, this volume delights the eye and fires the imagination with unexpected images of lands that yet retain the marks of their primeval origins.