



Hawk Flies Above: Journey to the Heart of the Sandhills

By Lisa Dale Norton

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Hawk Flies Above: Journey to the Heart of the Sandhills By Lisa Dale Norton Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

First-time author Norton strikes a fine balance between memoir and nature essay in writing of her homecoming to the wellspring of her childhood memories, the Cedar River of Nebraska. She had come home to nurse the grief of having been raped and of trying to drown the memory of that horrible event in alcohol. "For long years I felt afloat without mooring, without anchor," she writes, until she finally returned to that lean and austere place of childhood pleasures. Her account of finding a psychic center among family and friends is affecting without being sentimental, and Norton writes warmly of the plants and animals that inhabit this place--cranes, curlews, sand roses, and other denizens of the High Plains--and of the people who work the land.

From Publishers Weekly

Growing up in a small Nebraska town, Norton had a magical childhood until her mother abruptly abandoned her family. Because of this and another traumatic event (shortly after college, she was raped and beaten by a stranger who left her for dead), life seemed meaningless, and for years she wandered aimlessly around the country, drinking, smoking pot, overeating and trying to run away from herself. In 1984, Norton returned for six months to the cabin on Lake Ericson in the Nebraska Sandhills, where she and her family had spent their summers, ostensibly to complete graduate school by writing about the place but actually to come to grips with her troubled past. Six years later, she went again to the Sandhills, this time to discover that the land she considered idyllic was suffering from its own problems?soil depletion, lakes fouled by farm chemicals, limited water resources. In this memoir, Norton recounts with disarming simplicity her attempts to find a purpose in life by returning to her childhood home, weaving her story together with sensitive descriptions of the windswept dunes, the vegetation, the wildlife and the people of the endangered Sandhills. Norton teaches writing at the Neahkahnie Institute in Oregon. Illustrations not seen by PW.

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From Library Journal

Journalist and writing teacher Norton has returned to her native state of Nebraska several times in the past 15 years. In the process, she discovered that her personal growth is inextricably entwined with the geography of Lake Ericson, found in the part of Nebraska known as the Sandhills, where she spent summers as a child. She rediscovered this arid prairie region in 1984, while spending the summer at her family's lakeside cabin. Struggles with her own personal problems take place in this wide-open landscape. Norton creates a memorable picture of the Sandhills, a complex ecosystem of grasses and cacti, marshes and deserts, dotted with tiny farm towns. Her evocative descriptions of the landscape blend beautifully with her journey of self-discovery. Recommended for popular collections of literary memoirs and nature writing.?Gwen Gregory, New Mexico State Univ. Lib., Las Cruces

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Users Review

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Melissa Wilcox:

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