



Another North: Essays

Jennifer Brice

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Written in her middle age, the essays in Jennifer Brice's memoir *Another North* cover her perspectives on place, selfhood, and life in general.

Alaska, with its massive scale and minus-fifty-degree winter temperatures, molded and shaped Brice, even after life took her elsewhere—to Hamilton, a small town in upstate New York where she learned about the coldness of not fitting in. Brice struggled to find a community of like-minded people in Hamilton, feeling pervasive discomfort—"a little bit like being on Prozac: the highs are not as high, the lows not as low."

These essays infuse memories, objects, and events with meaning. They include philosophical musings on the passage of time and on grieving friends; they cover feelings of ecstasy over the familiarity of Brice's grandmother's lima beans and cream casserole. Place is paramount throughout, mooring the stories. Indeed, places are personified, as though they are capable of responding to Brice's love.

Poetic multisensory descriptions appear throughout the book, as of "Silt rustling like silk underskirts" to evoke the sound of a river's flow and of the "opulent secret" of warm, soft fur worn next to the skin. While the entries progress sans urgency over self-transformation, they also express consistent longings to discover how to fit in without losing one's inner wildness.

As bold as the act of flying a small plane over vast expanses of snow fringed by mountains, *Another North* is a contemplative memoir-in-essays that muses on whether one's geographical location is a matter of destiny, and what is really meant when one says, "I belong here," or decides, "I don't."

KRISTINE MORRIS (July / August 2024)

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