

Every Step Is Home: A Spiritual Geography from Appalachia to Alaska

Lori Erickson

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Impelled by a lifelong fascination with the ties between spirituality and travel, Lori Erickson has visited and written about holy sites across the globe. In *Every Step Is Home*, she focuses on her home country, visiting sacred places in the United States.

In this book, Erickson's steps don't lead to grand cathedrals but to the transformative, powerful elements supporting life itself. All of these sites moved her so much that she wondered why, after having encountered the spirit under the vastness of the sky, or in the majestic presence of nature's wildness, anyone would ever again seek what's holy in a building.

Erickson began in Iowa, her home state. She writes about its expansive Effigy Mounds National Monument, with its more than two hundred prehistoric Indigenous mounds. In Nebraska, she stood breathless beneath the beating wings of over 600,000 sandhill cranes on the banks of the Platte River. She was shaken to her core by the rumble of bison hooves in South Dakota's "Buffalo Roundup"; visited an ancient quarry in Minnesota where the sacred stone used in making Indian ceremonial pipes is found; and was amazed by thousand-year-old Indigenous art on the walls of Tennessee's Dunbar Cave.

In New Mexico, Erickson felt the healing power of the "holy dirt" beneath a small Spanish mission church; among California's towering redwoods, she found blessing in nature's cathedral. Trips to Hawaii and Alaska brought messages from fiery volcanoes and the grand spectacle of the Northern Lights.

Each mythical site visited in *Every Step Is Home* speaks to the bond between humans and the natural world, affirming the notion that "some truths are so large that only a myth can contain them."

KRISTINE MORRIS (September / October 2023)

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