



Far from Home

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Ron Powers, former television on-air columnist for “CBS Sunday Morning,” winner of a 1973 Pulitzer Prize for criticism, continues in FAR FROM HOME an interest in small-town America revealed earlier in his WHITE TOWN DROWSING. In FAR FROM HOME, Powers examines analytically and in elegant prose the decline of Cairo, Illinois, downriver from his native Hannibal, Missouri, after race riots in the 1960’s led to a wrenching industrial retrenchment and of Kent, Connecticut, whose bucolic way of life fell victim to the inroads real estate developers and weekend refugees from Manhattan made on it.

In examining two towns, one a town in the Midwest bordered by the Mississippi and Ohio rivers, the other a quiet haven in southern New England, Powers makes trenchant statements about the quality of life in the United States and about the implications all U.S. citizens might draw from the disintegration of their nation’s small towns. The move from an agricultural/industrial economy to one concerned largely with information has resulted in the growth of twelve large population centers across the United States that, by the year 2000, will contain seventy percent of the country’s population.

Although one of the two towns Powers examines has been destroyed by poverty, the other by an encroaching affluence, the outcomes are similar: Both towns have ceased to exist as they were. Kent is no longer Kent, Cairo no longer Cairo. Both towns are victims, cruelly raped by socioeconomic changes beyond their control.

Sources for Further Study

Library Journal. CXVI, April 15, 1991, p. 114.

The Nation. CCLIII, October 14, 1991, p. 454.

Publishers Weekly. CCLVIII, April 12, 1991, p. 50.

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