



# Holy Land: A Suburban Memoir

By D. J. Waldie

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**Holy Land: A Suburban Memoir** By D. J. Waldie

**"Infinitely moving and powerful, just dead-on right, and absolutely original." ?Joan Didion**

Since its publication in 1996, *Holy Land* has become an American classic. In "quick, translucent prose" (Michiko Kakutani, *New York Times*) that is at once lyrical and unsentimental, D. J. Waldie recounts growing up in Lakewood, California, a prototypical post-World War II suburb. Laid out in 316 sections as carefully measured as a grid of tract houses, *Holy Land* is by turns touching, eerie, funny, and encyclopedic in its handling of what was gained and lost when thousands of blue-collar families were thrown together in the suburbs of the 1950s. An intensely realized and wholly original memoir about the way in which a place can shape a life, *Holy Land* is ultimately about the resonance of choices?how wide a street should be, what to name a park?and the hopes that are realized in the habits of everyday life.

20 illustrations

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## **Holy Land: A Suburban Memoir** By D. J. Waldie Bibliography

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Amazon.com Review**

Welcome to Lakewood, California, the world's largest suburb and the subject of an oddly mesmerizing account of its creation by D. J. Waldie. Waldie describes how bean fields were drawn up, sectioned off and divided up--leaving tracts for small houses of similar design. The author changes while the land around him does, in a story of how people make places and, more so, places make people.

### **From Publishers Weekly**

Waldie, public information officer of Lakewood, Calif., as a boy moved with his family to one of that town's suburbs that was designed and built nearly overnight during the 1950s. In this unusual and compelling memoir organized into a series of short, episodic essays, some of which were previously published in journals, the author describes both a place and the mindset of a decade. Built on a grid, the subdivision of identical houses on similar lots was owned by three businessmen whose Jewish background would have prevented them from living there at that time. Homes were quickly sold to young couples?many of the men were WWII veterans?purchasing a house for the first time. The design of a shopping mall within Lakewood that was opened in 1952 included a half-mile civil defense fallout shelter and reflected the fear of Soviet attack that was mirrored by the attitudes of the Roman Catholic nuns who taught Waldie in school. Photos. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

### **From Library Journal**

Both these books focus on how the concept of home shaped the lives of 1950s American families. Froncek tells a poignant story of a son's attempt to reconcile himself to his father, an event triggered by the father's Alzheimer's disease and his eventual death in a nursing home. The son finds the key to his father's life in the house the man built for his growing family, then precipitously abandoned. Froncek's quest leads not only to a better understanding of his father but also to greater self-knowledge and acceptance. Waldie, the public information officer for Lakewood, California, brings that suburb to life by interweaving a plethora of historical facts and statistical details with brief anecdotes about community residents. Ironically, these anecdotes tend to focus on those who violated community norms. His work, organized into 316 brief sections, combines personal narrative with a history of real-estate development in the community. Several common threads run through each memoir: father-son relations, fear of communism, community responses to the Vietnam War dead, even the Catholic liturgy during Holy Week. Yet these are very different books. Froncek's memoir celebrates the individualism of a man who built his own house and hungered to rise above the herd; Waldie's describes the virtues of ordinariness and uniformity resulting from mass production. Froncek's lyrical memoir will appeal to a general audience; Waldie's work will more likely attract readers with an interest in urban planning.?William Gargan, Brooklyn Coll. Lib., CUNY Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Tawny Morgenstern:**

This Holy Land: A Suburban Memoir book is not ordinary book, you have after that it the world is in your hands. The benefit you receive by reading this book is usually information inside this e-book incredible fresh, you will get information which is getting deeper you read a lot of information you will get. This

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**Rose Sosa:**

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**Elizabeth Easterling:**

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