



My Address is a River: A Place to Belong, Closer to Home

Chris Highland

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For nearly thirty years Chris Highland has sauntered the rivers and streams of poverty and homelessness as a teacher, social worker and radical chaplain. His "practice of presence" among people who find themselves stuck on the muddy banks or in the swirling eddies of poverty, despair and addiction reveals something surprising. He discovers gifted ability among those who have disabilities, the meaning of freedom among incarcerated people and a profound sense of home among houseless women, men, youth and children. "Chaplain Chris," as he was affectionately known in the jails and on the streets, faced fear locked into maximum security units of a county jail, faced his own limitations teaching and being taught by persons with broken brains, faced his own need for shelter and attachment to possessions by walking the streets, sharing meals and creating art with good human beings who often possess nothing but what they carry on their backs, and bear in their hearts and minds. He has seen the pained face of America reflected in the churning rivers of humanity and come away with stones of truth and driftwood of insight. *My Address is a River* is a testimony to the courage and wisdom of society's castaways, neighbors without addresses who are often pushed out of cities, communities and congregations to seek islands of refuge for shelter, stability and sanity. The seventy meditations, reflections and stories contained in these pages are gleaned from the hardcore pavement, steel and cement where this "keeper of the roofless chapel" has been present for hidden but not entirely helpless or hopeless people. Each selection is paralleled by a teaching from a spiritual, poetic or literary source. Enhanced with the author's vivid, black and white photographs of natural waterways, this collection will inspire communities to re-vision and re-open more doors and minds, to create more channels for compassionate action in other towns, on other streets, by other rivers.

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