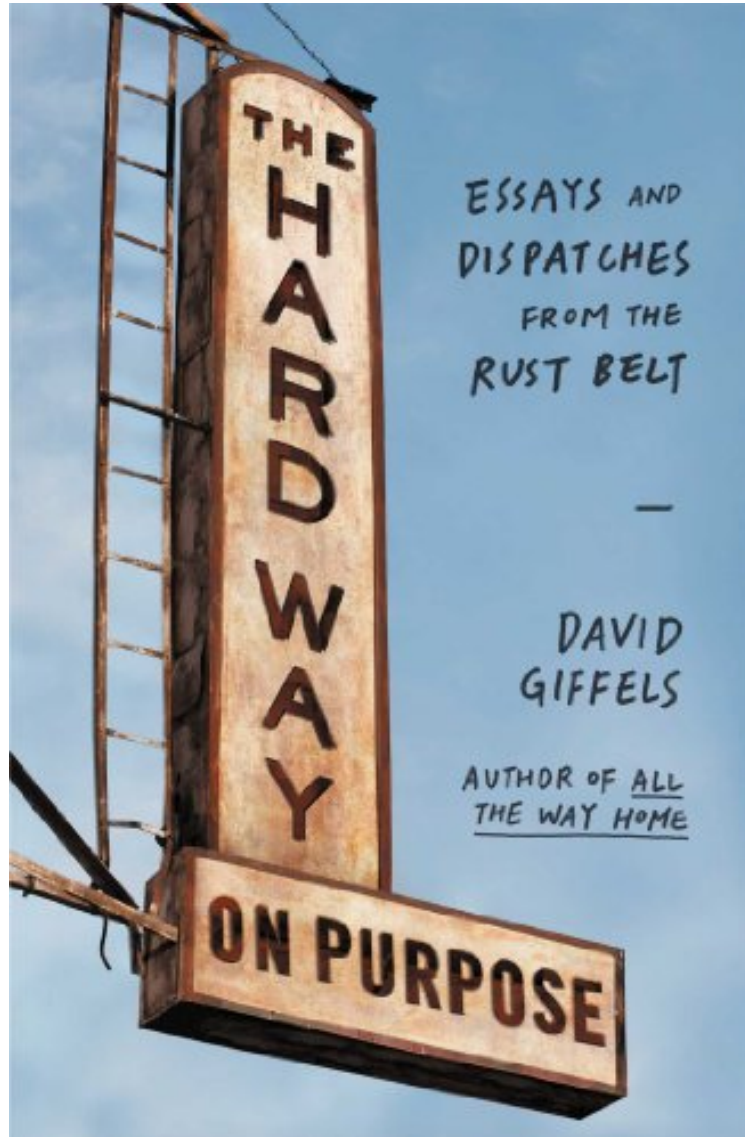


The Hard Way on Purpose: Essays and Dispatches from the Rust Belt

David Giffels

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David Giffels : The Hard Way on Purpose: Essays and Dispatches from the Rust Belt before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Hard Way on Purpose: Essays and Dispatches from the Rust Belt:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Akron, Ohio ... from the insideBy James WalkerI met Mr. Giffels when he collaborated with Steve Love on "Wheels of Fortune" a number of years ago. That volume focused upon the

demise of The Rubber Capitol of the World (Akron, Ohio) and this book of essays has much in it which touches upon that period. As well, however, David branches out in all the directions he (and some friends) experienced growing up in Tiretown and rings true on virtually every page. Some few will carp about the occasional vulgar usage, but sometimes truth has a rough edge to it -- in case you haven't noticed. Anyone who lived in an industry-ruled city in the '50s, '60s, '70's and even '80s should find much to connect with here. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A cultural touchstone for the post-industrial Midwest By CJARemarkably insightful treasury of essays devoted to being from a place, quantifying that place, finding where you belong in that place and growing to love that place, independently, even when it's a "three-legged dog." This book will resonate deafeningly with those who grew up in prosperous one-industry towns, only to watch that industry dismantled just as they were coming of age and planning their future. If you ever looked at your hometown with hard eyes and asked if you should stay or go, this book is your cultural autobiography. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Personal Essays at Their Best By Jeff K. David Giffels has written a wonderful book about time and place, and in the process proves himself to be a master of the personal essay. His pieces are highly personal and particular while at the same time touching on the universal. Like Chuck Klosterman, he writes with a sharp observational eye and an intelligent wit. Of course, you don't have to be from northeast Ohio to appreciate this book, but if you are from there, or like me spent a lot of time there, it would be a shame to miss this fine read.

Award-winning author and journalist David Giffels explores the meaning of identity and place, hamburgers, hard work, and basketball in this collection of wry, irreverent essays reflecting on the many aspects of Midwestern culture and life from an insiders perspective. In *The Hard Way on Purpose*, David Giffels takes us on an insiders journey through the wreckage and resurgence of Americas Rust Belt. A native who never knew the good times, yet never abandoned his hometown of Akron, Giffels plumbs the touchstones and idiosyncrasies of a region where industry has fallen, bowling is a legitimate profession, bizarre weather is the norm, rock n roll is desperate, thrift store culture thrives, and sports is heartbreak. Intelligent, humorous, and warm, Giffels linked essays are about coming of age in the Midwest and about the stubborn, optimistic, and resourceful people who prevail there.

From Booklist Give us something to root for, Akron, Ohio, writer and professor Giffels says near the beginning of this collection of personal essays about his embattled home state. Ohio once was home to manufacturing plants, industry, prosperity. That began to change in the 1960s, when factories began to close, and the dismantling of the state and of Akron specifically continues to this day. And its not just a figurative dismantling: one of the most moving essays here describes the authors thoughts as he watched an old Firestone smokestack being literally dismantled, brick by brick, on a summers day. Giffels essays put a human face on daily life in todays Ohio, while reminding readers of all the things Ohio has given the world: from the Converse Chuck Taylor sneaker to rockers Devo and Chrissie Hynde, to the hamburger (well, probably not, but Ohios claim to the burger makes a heck of a good story). An interesting and occasionally moving portrait of a place that, despite its decades-long downward slide, remains, for many, a pretty good place to live. --David Pitt They still build souls in Akron. *The Hard Way on Purpose* is proof. David Giffels is a Rust Belt prophet, laughingsometimes through his tears in Dooms face. You want to hear America singing? Buy this book. (Scott Raab, author of *The Whore of Akron: One Mans Search for the Soul of LeBron James*) David Giffels writes straight into the heart of Akron, Ohio, the place we both call home. Its a hard place to be from, which is why it makes such a good story. What other place could have spawned Jim Jarmusch, LeBron James, Lux Interior and the Goodyear blimp? So its no accident that this book reads like the American soulwicked and sincere and ingeniously weird. It is a great story, an authentic one about the way people protect the places they love, and *The Hard Way on Purpose* gets it exactly right. (Patrick Carney, The Black Keys (celebrated indie rock band from Akron, Ohio)) This amazing book will resonate with anyone whos ever loved a hometown, wherever it might be especially if its the kind of hometown people usually leave. Even if youve never been to Akron, Giffels brilliantly captures how it feels to love your city fiercely, even when its falling apart. He celebrates Akron as the Paris of hard times. Giffels might be its Baudelaire. (Rob Sheffield, author of *Love Is a Mix Tape* and *Turn Around Bright Eyes*) Occasionally, an essayist so perfectly chronicles a specific place that he or she becomes synonymous with it. Joseph Mitchell and New York; Joan Didion and California; Adam Gopnik and Paris; John Jeremiah Sullivan and the American South. With *The Hard Way on Purpose*, David Giffels has pulled a chair up to this lofty literary table, and in so doing, provided the hardscrabble industrial Midwest with its own lyrical, learned, and very large-hearted champion. (David Goodwillie, author of *American Subversive*) A heartfelt analysis...the portrait painted here is an honest and revealing one, illuminating the cultural factors that have given a strange, shadowy sort of hope to millions of Americans. (Publishers Weekly) "This collection of essays about life in Akron, Ohio, is so deep and inviting and surprising that I plan to carry a bunch in my trunk. Then, instead of mounting the Heartland defense, Ill just throw the bigmouth fucknut in question a copy of Giffels masterwork and let it do the talking." (Eric Nuzum, Washington Independent of Books) "[An] appealing, original fusion of personal essay collection and Rust Belt post-mortem. . . funny and crisply rendered." (Kirkus) "[Giffels] gives you the Midwestern experience, from hoping your greatest sports star will choose his

hometown over the bright lights, big city (in this case, LeBron James, who famously didn't keep playing for his hometown) to the search for the perfect bowling shirt." (Flavorwire) Giffels' voice is friendly, his details so vibrant and fresh. . . . A region on the mend has found its voice. (The New York Times Book) "Let this heartfelt collection of essays by David Giffels reveal the wit and pride that are beyond all our preconceptions of Akron, Ohio." (Los Angeles Times) About the Author David Giffels is the author of *The Hard Way on Purpose: Essays and Dispatches From the Rust Belt*, nominated for the PEN/Diamonstein-Spielvogel Award for the Art of the Essay, the memoir *All the Way Home*, winner of the Ohioana Book Award, and *Furnishing Eternity*. His writing has appeared in the *New York Times Magazine*, *the Atlantic.com*, *Parade*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Esquire.com*, *Grantland.com*, *Redbook*, and many other publications. He also was a writer for the MTV series *Beavis and Butt-Head*. He is an associate professor of English at the University of Akron, where he teaches creative nonfiction in the Northeast Ohio Master of Fine Arts Program.