



The United States of Wind: A Travelogue

Daniel Canty

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Raise the windsock. Read the compass. Ride where the wind wills it.

Late 2010. From the end of fall to the beginning of winter, Daniel Canty becomes a wind seeker. Aboard the Blue Rider, a venerable midnight-blue Ford Ranger crested with a weathervane and a retractable windsock, he surrenders himself to the fluidity of air currents. The adventure leads him and artist driver Patrick Beaulieu from the plains of the Midwest up to Chicago, the Windy City, into the wind tunnel linking the Great Lakes, through the cities of lost industry of the Rust Belt, only to veer off into Amish pastoralia, and to the forests of Pennsylvania, Civil War land, where fracking is stirring up the ghosts of the first oil rush.

Canty creates a gentle road book, a melancholy blue guide written in an airy, associative prose, where images coalesce and dissipate, carried away through the outer and inner American landscape. The book, mixing the tropes of road narrative, poetic fabulation, and philosophical memoir, reaches towards images on the horizon of memory, to find out where they come from, while coming to the foreordained realization that, wherever memory may lead us, its images will be long gone when we get there and most probably were never even there at all. The book's through-line is about this emotional reality of images, the ways in which they take hold upon us and carry us back to the deep narrative of self. Clocking in at 160 pages, most readers don't realize that the adventure spans only ten days, and that *The United States of Wind* is, in a very real way, a journey through a fold in time.

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