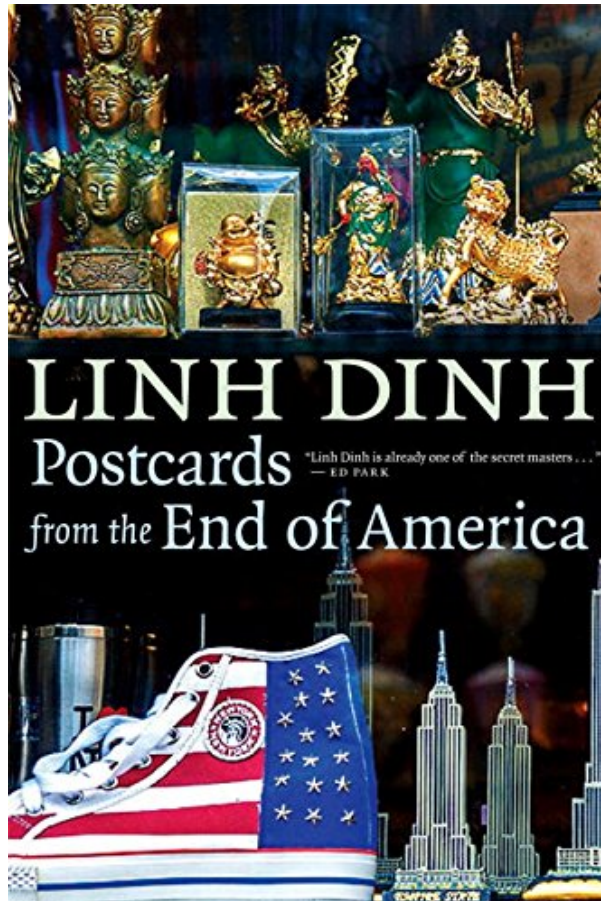
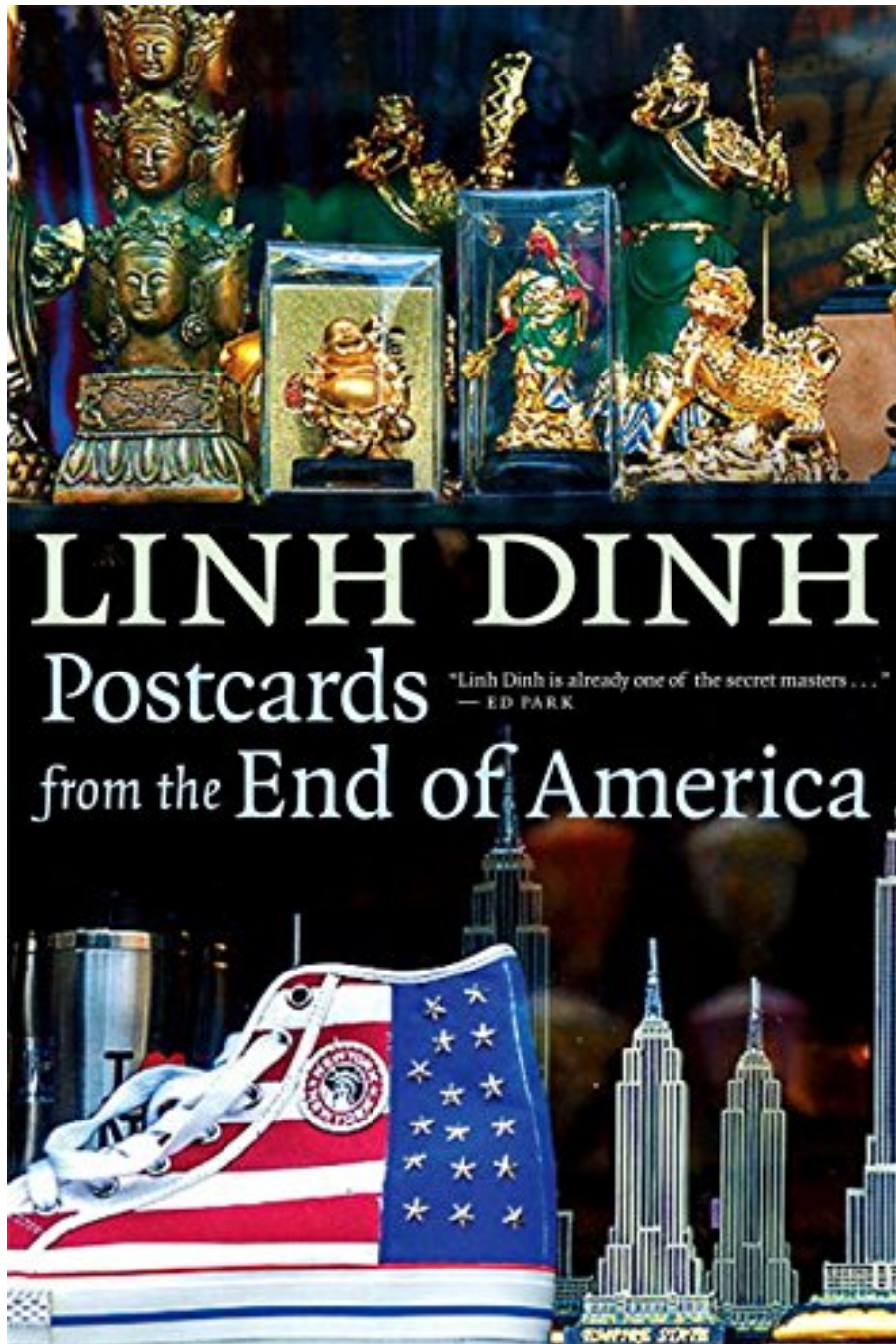


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## Review

"Linh Dinh's *Postcards from the End of America* is a collection of some of the most brilliant observations penned on the terminal decline of the American empire. He gives a voice to those rendered invisible by a bankrupt corporate press. He has an unflinching honesty, refusing to romanticize the poor while also writing with great empathy about their lives. He lays bare the predatory evil of corporate capitalism, the death of liberty engendered by our security and surveillance state and the human cost of our system of inverted totalitarianism. He would make George Orwell or Joseph Roth proud. There are few writers in America I admire more." —Chris Hedges, author of *Wages of Rebellion: The Moral Imperative of Revolt*

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Roaming the country by bus and train, on a budget and without any institutional support, Linh Dinh set out to document, in words and pictures, what life is like for people. From Los Angeles, Cheyenne, Portland, and New Orleans, to Jackson and Wolf Point--Linh walked miles and miles through unfamiliar neighborhoods, talking to whoever would talk to him: the homeless living in tent cities, the peddlers, the protestors, the public preachers, the prostitutes. With the uncompromising eye of a Walker Evans or a Dorothea Lange, and the indomitable, forthright prose of a modern-day Nelson Algren or James Agee, Dinh documents the appalling and the absurd with warmth and honesty, giving voice to America's often forgotten citizens and championing the awesome strength it takes to survive for those on the bottom.

Growing out of a photo and political writing blog Linh has maintained since 2009, Postcards from the End of America is an unflinching diary of what Linh sees as the accelerating collapse of America. Tracking the economic, political, and social unraveling--from the casinos to the abandoned factories and over all the sidewalks in between--with a poet's incisive tongue, Linh shows us the uncanny power of the people in the face of societal devastation.

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A very compelling read

By JustPlainBill

This is a collection of Linh Dinh's postcards, which taken together are a diary of his travels and his conversations with those he meets. When he arrives in town, he doesn't look for the "important" people in town or the local celebrities. Instead, he seeks out the ordinary Americans that populate buses, trains, local bars and restaurants, or the streets themselves. In impressive detail, he shares with his readers brief portraits of them and the details of their conversations together.

Each of these postcards skillfully and subtly pulls you into the intimacy of the conversation. Although Linh never goes for sentimentality or sympathy, and does not judge his conversation partners, you would need a heart of stone to avoid feeling sad or occasionally heartbroken. This feeling builds as you eventually realize in your travels with Linh that he has not cherry-picked his experiences—the people he meets are everywhere, and not hard to find if you are looking in the right place.

Linh's descriptions truly bring each person he meets to life. The subjects themselves are by turns cheerful, resigned, once in a while briefly angry or irritated. Unexpectedly, they hardly ever seem to feel openly sorry for themselves. Linh takes a personal risk time and time again that few of us would risk even once, actively seeking engagement with people no matter where he needs to go to meet them.

Although the "postcards" are arranged in chronological order (tracking his progress across the US by bus and train), none are dependent on one another, and could be read in any order. Even without Linh's prompting,

however, you will feel some themes emerge unbidden as you continue. Linh reserves his own judgements for general commentary on the state of US society, spaced throughout his narrative. Personally, this reader did not find much to disagree with in that respect.

Some might be tempted to judge or label many of the people Linh talks to as isolated aberrations or society's outliers, but Linh will help you recognize that there are a lot more of them than you think, and they more and more are becoming the largest part of what is now America.

This is one of the best and most engaging books I have read in a long time, and I cannot recommend it highly enough. You can also read Linh's ongoing postcards at his blog at [linhdinhphotos.blogspot.com](http://linhdinhphotos.blogspot.com).

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

With bombs and drones, then sticks and stones

By Scott Meredith

This brilliantly horrifying book is the prose version of Dylan's bleakest (and most real) ballad, North Country Blues. But whether you're blue or red, you're already "sliding down the oily pole of modernity" and will soon be "fighting for the remaining scraps". Get your head up it right here.

So the mining gates locked

And the red iron rotted

And the room smelled heavy from drinking

Where the sad silent song

Made the hour twice as long

As I waited for the sun to go sinking.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Laugh: it's not funny

By Nick J. Cuccia

Well written and insightful. The fall of an American empire rotting from the bottom up. This book documents the consequences of plutocracy, inequality and all while having a good laugh and a washed down with a few beers. Reminds me of Studs Turkel.

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