



Belonging: A Culture of Place

By bell hooks

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Belonging: A Culture of Place By bell hooks

What does it mean to call a place home? Who is allowed to become a member of a community? When can we say that we truly belong?

These are some of the questions of place and belonging that renowned cultural critic bell hooks examines in her new book, *Belonging: A Culture of Place*. Traversing past and present, *Belonging* charts a cyclical journey in which hooks moves from place to place, from country to city and back again, only to end where she began--her old Kentucky home.

hooks has written provocatively about race, gender, and class; and in this book she turns her attention to focus on issues of land and land ownership. Reflecting on the fact that 90% of all black people lived in the agrarian South before mass migration to northern cities in the early 1900s, she writes about black farmers, about black folks who have been committed both in the past and in the present to local food production, to being organic, and to finding solace in nature.

Naturally, it would be impossible to contemplate these issues without thinking about the politics of race and class. Reflecting on the racism that continues to find expression in the world of real estate, she writes about segregation in housing and economic racialized zoning. In these critical essays, hooks finds surprising connections that link the environment and sustainability to the politics of race and class that reach far beyond Kentucky.

With characteristic insight and honesty, *Belonging* offers a remarkable vision of a world where all people--wherever they may call home--can live fully and well, where everyone can belong.

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Belonging: A Culture of Place By bell hooks **Bibliography**

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Editorial Review

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Righteous cultural critic hooks continues her deep inquiry into how we might live more meaningful and sustainable lives in essays that combine an ecological perspective with arresting insights into African American agrarian history. Hooks writes about the solace she found as a girl in the hills of Kentucky, her long years away, and her return, which has inspired a fresh look at the self-reliant communities of black Appalachians and their nurturing connection to the land. As hooks parallels the environmental crime of mountaintop-removal coal mining with the injustices poor people face, she retrieves the lost stories of black farmers and ponders the psychological consequences of the great migration to the industrialized, urban North, and the degradation of tobacco from a sacred plant to a deadly product. Paying tribute to her quilt-maker grandmother, who instilled in her a “spiritual aesthetic,” hooks, at once intellectually rigorous and warmly personal, creates a quilt of radiant essays that defines a “culture of belonging” rooted in reverence for life and a genuine involvement with place and community. --Donna Seaman

About the Author

bell hooks is a writer and critic who has taught most recently at Berea College in Kentucky, where she is Distinguished Professor in Residence. Among her many books are the feminist classic *Ain't I A Woman*, the dialogue (with Cornel West) *Breaking Bread*, the children's books *Happy to Be Nappy* and *Be Boy Buzz*, the memoir *Bone Black* (Holt), and the general interest titles *All About Love*, *Rock My Soul*, and *Communion*. She has published six titles with Routledge: *We Real Cool*, *Where We Stand*, *Teaching to Transgress*, *Teaching Community*, *Outlaw Culture*, and *Reel to Real*.

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