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Walking Magpie: On and Off the Leash

by Chuck Forsman

Introduction by Eric Paddock

Published in association with the Denver Art Museum

People love dogs, and dogs love people. Walking a dog is one of the most visible and mutually beneficial manifestations of that bond. It is a ritual steeped in affection and obligation. It doesn't have a day off. It doesn't pay the bills or clean the dishes or do the laundry. Still, people and dogs alike gain the benefits of exercise, socialization, shared experiences, and observations. Another benefit, often overlooked, is the pleasure of mutually indulging a trait that ordinary dogs share with extraordinary people: curiosity. This book is, in many ways, an ode to curiosity.

Walking Magpie is about a dog and what a dog sees. It is also a work of serious photography by a well-known and pioneering landscape artist: Chuck Forsman, who, for more than forty years, has been a keen observer of the interface between landscape and culture as expressed through his paintings and photographic art. As a result, Forsman often goes to places that might not be on everyone's radar screen.

In this book, Forsman took his Leica camera with him during his walks with Magpie, the family dog. Often, these walks were in the neighborhood and surrounding hills where Forsman lives: near the Flatirons in Boulder. But Magpie joins Forsman on other adventures, from Alaska and the Northwest Territories of Canada to Florida, Ohio, and New York City. The intent is to turn these experiences into art. With each picture we sense mystery rather than clarity, questions about place rather than answers. We hardly can know what a dog knows, but with this book we can appreciate better what a dog sees and senses and experiences, helping the human and canine imagination to meld, at least a little.

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FROM THE INTRODUCTION

"For more than forty years, Chuck Forsman has been a pioneering landscape artist whose paintings and photographs have engaged us and helped us to focus on environmental and land-use issues. Here, in *Walking Magpie*, Forsman shows us a layered continental landscape that is banal and beautiful, gentle and terrifying by turns. His eye for form, detail, and the occasional quiet joke—combined with Magpie's canine exploration and acceptance of the world as he finds it—challenge ordinary perceptions of 'landscape' and of 'community' and awaken in us a new sense of where and how we live."

—Eric Paddock, Curator of Photography, Denver Art Museum

