



Home To Red Island

Raymond O. West

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As recently as the 1960s, a North American society was faced with just this challenge when a government, more concerned with economy and efficiency, forced the resettlement of centuries-old communities on outlying islands of Newfoundland. Then, a scant three-decades later, that same government shut down the resettled people's only industry: cod fishing. A prodigal son, Paddy Quinn, returns to his native Placentia Bay region, having lived on the mainland most of his adult life. Now an older man, he seeks to resurrect his past life, and love, and becomes deeply involved in a move to strike out to capture the lost culture of one of the now deserted outlying islands. Sharing the story's lead is Jim Clarey, a disenfranchised fisherman on Newfoundland's Avalon Peninsula. Jim, the surviving and weaker brother in what had been a powerful fishing partnership, now gains the strength to lead a loosely knit band of hopefuls toward a new life on Red Island. He's motivated to act by the failing health and likely demise of a friend, whose wife is Paddy's childhood sweetheart. The fleet of small fishing boats sets out on this unlikely enterprise, manned by a diverse group of the town's population, each with an unresolved history and individually compelling goal. Thwarted by initially unsympathetic bureaucrats, together they discover their lost lives, their individual weaknesses and fears, and become the society that was lost forty years before. Home to Red Island is a fictional account of the resettlement program and fishing moratorium that has wiped out a way of life and nearly decimated an entire culture.

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Irene Gonzales:

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