



Along Martin Luther King: Travels on Black America's Main Street

Jonathan Tilove

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Over the course of two years, Jonathan Tilove and freelance photographer Michael Falco traveled along some of the 650 Martin Luther King Jr. streets, avenues, and boulevards across the country--in Harlem; Belle Glade, Florida; Atlanta; Selma, Alabama; Jackson and Canton, Mississippi; Chicago; Oakland, California; Portland, Oregon; and nearly a score of cities and towns throughout Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Kansas.

As this journey reveals, life along King is at once tightly conjoined and kaleidoscopically diverse. And that is precisely what Tilove has lyrically portrayed in the writing of this book, and what Falco has so superbly illuminated with his rich photographs of the people along Martin Luther King.

We meet Annie Williams, who lives and works on Belle Glade's Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, managing the Sudsy City Laundromat, and who likes the idea that every black community she visits now has a main street with a common name; and Marion Tumbleweed Beach, a seventy-three-year-old teacher, writer, poet, reporter, editor, and activist who lives on Martin Luther King Street in Selma, Alabama, but finds the phenomenon a source of dismay: "I say they still get us with trinkets. We go cheap. I resent it."

Tilove writes of the King streets: "Map them and you map a nation within a nation, a place where white America seldom goes and black America can be itself. It is a parallel universe with a different center of gravity and distinctive sensibilities, kinship at two or three degrees of separation, not six. There is no other street like it."

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