



Portfolio

Russell A. Graves

In 1993 I had an epiphany. For the first time in my life I knew exactly what I wanted. Just graduated from college, I took my first real job in the Texas rolling plains – teaching agriculture at the local high school in the southeastern panhandle town of Childress. My intentions were straightforward: work in Childress for a couple of years and then migrate east down the Red River some 250 miles back to where I was raised.

But the red-dirt rolling plains had a hold on me both creatively and spiritually. Nearly nine years and some 30,000 images later, my commitment to the people and places in this part of Texas is stronger now than ever.

The land is rugged and unforgiving, yet it has softness about it. Slight breezes make the junipers sway in rhythmic syncopation with the wind. Mornings bring crimson rays of sunlight spilling across the mesquite and prickly pear bad-

lands and illuminate the landscape in almost a surreal cloak of clean light domed by an immense cobalt sky.

Nowhere else in Texas does so much diversity of wildlife exist. Mule deer and whitetails are often seen intermingling while Rio Grande turkey, blue and bobwhite quail, and the occasional ring-necked pheasant strut and scratch the dirt while they play their eternal game of survival.

The rolling plains of Texas is a beautiful land. It is sparse in population, yet thick with the history of buffalo hunters, historic cattle ranches and Plains Indian wars. It has largely been the focus of most of my work with magazines and the inspiration for at least three of my books.

It is my field of dreams and its infinite mystery continues to draw me afield.

