

Review: The Black Rock Desert

By William Fox and Mark Klett

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William Fox; photographs by Klett Mark. *The Black Rock Desert*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2002. 77 pp. ISBN: 0-8165-2172-7 (paperback). \$US13.95. Acid-free paper.

When I first started reading this book I had a feeling that William Fox could have been a poet. Then, I made an investigation about the author and found out, not surprisingly, that he had written more than a dozen books on poetry. His poetic nature is quite obvious in this book. Although it is not a poetry book, *The Black Rock Desert* was written in a lyrical language. Mark Klett, who is one of the eminent photographers in America, has been photographing the West for many years. This book is the collaboration of the duo; their first book, *View Finder*, was published in 2001.

The book begins with a preface that tells you how a photographer and a writer work together. The titles of the succeeding chapters are as follows: circumference, detritus, speed, panorama, surface, mirage, sky and circumference (once again). I quite like the way Fox describes the *playa*: "the playa resembled nothing so much as a jigsaw puzzle fit together with impossible precision" (I told you that he was a poet). There are exactly sixteen black and white photographs in the book and they are really aesthetic. However, one should not expect much from a 15 cm × 18 cm format book only 77 pages long. I am a bit disappointed and so will you be. This northern Nevada area, including the High Rock Canyon, has archaeological, paleontological, and geographical resources and includes many prehistoric and historic Native American sites and also mammoth sites. You will not find much about geography or history about this region in this book. It is not a travel guide either. The book is more like Fox's memoirs of the Black Rock Desert. It is just a peaceful bedtime book (at least it was for me). Fox and Klett wanted to have a nice time by making a short trip in the Black Rock Desert and afterward decided to write a book about their trip. And there it is...

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