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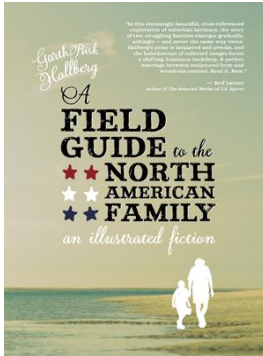
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A Field Guide to the North American Family

By Garth Risk Hallberg



“A gorgeous labyrinth of a book.”

—Rivka Galchen, author of *Atmospheric Disturbances*

“Stunningly beautiful, cross-referenced exploration of suburban intimacy.”

—Reif Larsen, author of *The Selected Works of T.S. Spivet*

In the insightful illustrated novel *A Field Guide to the North American Family*, connected vignettes tell the story of neighboring Long Island families the Hungates and the Harrisons.

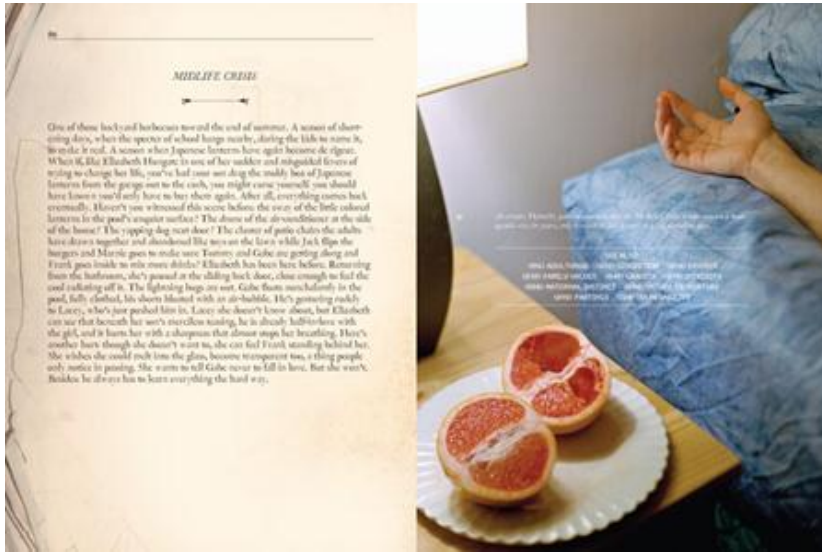
Through sixty-three entries that hover between scientific definition and prose poem, the families’ histories and tragedies unfold in settings like the backyard swimming pool and the school parking lot. Readers meet characters whose intertwined lives are marked by hardships: Gabe, whose love of graffiti leads to a horrible accident; his girlfriend Lacey, who stays with him even if he’s unfaithful; her brother Tommy, a jealous drug user and liar; and his mother Marnie, who’s still grieving after her husband’s unexpected death. Author Garth Risk Hallberg captures his specimens as only a true expert of human relationships could—with empathy, melancholy, and humor.

Using what Rief Larsen calls “a perfect marriage between sculptured form and wondrous content,” *A Field Guide to the North American Family* turns the process of making and reading a book on its head. Hallberg gathered the striking images accompanying the text from forty-seven friends, strangers, and professionals. Taking cues from Julio Cortazar’s story “Hopscotch” and the *Choose Your Own Adventure* series, the introduction urges readers to navigate the book however they wish—whether sequentially, by following cross-references, or at random—as pieces of the story come together unexpectedly and newly with each read. *A Field Guide to the North American Family* is an innovative and deeply personal addition to the lineage of the family novel.

Garth Risk Hallberg’s essays have been featured in *The Late American Novel* (Softskull Press 2011), *Slate*, *The Los Angeles Times: Jacket Copy*, *More Intelligent Life*, and *The Millions*, where he is a staff writer. He has had stories in *Glimmer Train*, *Canteen*, and *The Pinch*, among others. He is a 2008 Best New American Voice, chosen by Richard Bausch, as well as a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellow in Fiction, and he currently teaches at Fordham University.

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Garth Risk Hallberg

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