

That a cartographer could set out on a mission that's so emotional, so personal, so idiosyncratic, was news to me.

—IRA GLASS, host of *This American Life*, from his introduction to *Everything Sings: Maps for a Narrative Atlas*

The legendary Boylan Heights maps by iconoclast, geographer, and author **Denis Wood** are now collected in ***Everything Sings: Maps for a Narrative Atlas***

Imaginative atlases, radical cartography, and experimental geography make up a vibrant world of artists, flaneurs, political activists, psychogeographers, critical cartographers, poets, and others for whom a new way of mapping is equivalent to a new way of seeing and engaging the world. **Denis Wood's four decades of work as a geographer and writer has directly influenced the creative, anarchic, and activist spirit that inflects this growing phenomenon.**

The author of the popular and highly influential *The Power of Maps*, Wood was a key figure in disseminating the idea that all maps reflect a certain and powerful subjectivity rather than represent an objective reality. *The Power of Maps* began as Wood's curatorial vision for an exhibition at the Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum in 1992, became a book in the same year (now in its tenth printing) as well as a second exhibition at the Smithsonian in 1993. While *The Power of Maps* fueled a once heretical notion that has now transformed into the very premise for so much current creative and critical cartography, it is only one facet of Wood's work. With wit, irreverence, and rigor, Wood has written numerous books that critique, investigate, and, ultimately, reorient his readers not only to the micro-spatial—our neighborhoods, homes, and bodies—but also to our own very human instinct to understand where we live through making maps.

At the heart of Wood's life-long investigations is a legendary and exuberant endeavor: the Boylan Heights maps. Collected and published in *Everything Sings: Maps for a Narrative Atlas*, this is an atlas unlike any other. For geographers and cartographers (who've talked about them, saw fleeting glimpses of a handful of them), these maps liberated the imagination from the confines of what a map *should* map and *how* it could map it. They were storied for their unconventionality, their style, and their substance. When Ira Glass interviewed Wood for *This American Life*, these maps—and the wondrously obsessive endeavor of making them—captured the imagination of thousands of listeners far beyond those specialized worlds.

MORE →

EVERYTHING SINGS: MAPS FOR A NARRATIVE ATLAS by DENIS WOOD with an introduction by Ira Glass

\$28 • Paper • 112 pages • 8.5 x 10.75 • 85 b/w illustrations, including more than 50 maps

ISBN: 978-0-9799562-4-9 • **Release: November 12, 2010**

Advance Review Copies: PDF and digital media kit available now. Bound review copies available August 25.

Limited Edition: A set of six maps from the book printed on vellum in a portfolio case housed with the book, in a signed and numbered edition of 30. Current price: \$135.

From mapping radiowaves permeating the air to Halloween pumpkins on porches, Wood's joyful subversion of the traditional notions of mapmaking forge new ways of seeing not only the particular, but also the very nature of "place" itself. Surveying his century-old, half-square mile neighborhood in Raleigh, North Carolina, Wood searches for the revelatory details in what has never been mapped or may not even be mappable. In each map, he attunes the eye to the invisible, the overlooked, and the seemingly insignificant. Together, they accumulate into a multi-layered story about one neighborhood as well as about the pursuit of understanding the places we call home.

***Everything Sings* embodies Wood's "poetics of cartography" in which the experience of place is primary, useless knowledge is exalted, and representation strives toward poetic resonance.** Maps begin with the collection of data and here it was an intimate, human engagement with the neighborhood: going door to door to query every willing neighbor (about pets, radio habits, magazine subscriptions, etc.); walking a single neighborhood block at night to take a hundred and fifty light meter readings; sitting at the street corner for days counting cars; clocking the newspaper delivery boy on his route; scouring the local newsletters to catalogue the kinds of stories they tell and about whom they tell them; climbing the radio tower to take pictures of the street lights; lying in the middle of the road at night to sketch the horizon and chart the stars. If the data are the bones of the maps, then here the act of collecting the data is their heart.

And though the maps have a traditional rigor, they also have "fingerprints," an imaginative urgency, and a gamut of subjective arguments about the relationships between social class and cultural rituals; about the neighborhood as "transformer;" about a map's specificity, its narrative potential, its fleetingness and fragility: all qualities that reject the idea that a map conveys a single, static, and objective truth. In *Everything Sings*, Wood creates a fascinating tension between the empirical and the elusive, between what one can know and what one can imagine. **As much as *Everything Sings* is a collection of extraordinary maps, it is also a testament to the imaginative capacity of humans to make them.** That it is a book of maps *for* a narrative atlas speaks further still to the ambitions of the imagination and the very human desire to know the unknowable and map it.

Denis Wood is a geographer, an independent scholar, and the author of six books on maps, their power and subjectivity, including the popular and highly influential *The Power of Maps* which originated as an exhibition Wood curated for the Cooper Hewitt National Museum of Design and remounted at the Smithsonian Museum. His most recent publications include *The Natures of Maps* (University of Chicago, 2009) co-authored with John Fels and *Rethinking the Power of Maps* (Guildford, 2010) with Fels and John Krygier. Selected maps from *Everything Sings* have been exhibited internationally such as at the Tang Teaching Museum at Skidmore College, as well as reproduced in a variety of publications, including *You Are Here: Personal Geographies and Other Maps of the Imagination* by Katherine Harmon.

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