

When I was six years old, my family embarked on a long midwestern car trip. I remember that, driving through the endless wheat fields of North Dakota, I actually began to cry of boredom. ~~Amazed~~ The rest of the world's reaction to this region is often a ~~barren~~ <sup>barren</sup> narrative of, simply, a place where nothing much seems to happen; however, Debra Marquart ~~adds to~~ <sup>adds to</sup> this characterization in her piece, "The Horizontal World." Marquart colorfully illustrates the inherent drabness of North Dakota, ~~it~~ goes back in history to ~~discuss~~ <sup>discuss</sup> how long people have <sup>also</sup> characterized the area as such, but ~~discusses~~ <sup>discusses</sup> the hidden value of her home state.

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First, Marquart depicts (paragraph 1-5) North Dakota as a homogenous, barren place. She first describes how "lonely, treeless, and devoid of rises and curves" it is ~~to drive~~ <sup>to drive</sup> west on I-94, painting vividly a lonely image in the reader's mind; headed in a straight, seemingly endless line, surrounded by fields and more and more nothing. Marquart says it will feel like a "long-held pedal steel guitar note," the same feeling from the same moment stretching out to sound and feel endless. She jokingly calls it "a region that

purpose

Spawns both tornadoes and Republicans effectively satirizing the way consumers emerge from the area pretending to be paragons of virtue. She then expands on this idea later, talking about "fresh faced" midwestern blondes who leave a wholesome, virtuous area to become corrupted. Lastly, she discusses how there are so many conflicting views of the area in pop culture - the land of aforementioned virtue is also a "macabre land of murder-by-wood-chipper." Marquart acknowledges our simultaneous boredom and fascination with such an ambiguous area.

~~Next~~ Next, Marquart chronicles (paragraph 6-8) the historical monotony of North Dakota. Even in the 1820s, says she, a land survey called it "a dreary plain, wholly unfit for cultivation," including this quote in order to mirror her earlier asser about ND's barren qualities and reiterate how long-standing our "seeming bliss of the area." Marquart also chronicles the land grid system and how perfect it divided the area; "(North Dakota) laid itself down in neat, even squares suggesting that even the land itself is so boring that it simply complied with land-developers desires. This flat land, she notes, is "dubbed the Great American Desert".

including this bit of trivia to parallel her earlier statements about the land being empty and barren. ✓

Last, Marquart asserts (paragraph 9) the cultural and historical value of ~~North Dakota~~.

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She says, "I have found it" - is "the word that Archimedes cried" when he made a world-changing discovery. ✓  
Marquart includes this detail, along with her earlier talk of the region as the "Heartland", in order to assert the area's great and sentimental value to her, because of her ancestors and her upbringing. ✓

she says her ancestors would "not have known" what Eureka meant, but "would have felt it", emphasizing that, despite the physically barren appearance of the area, it felt like home, like heartland to her ancestors, and it feels like home to her.

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The author, by acknowledging in her piece the poor quality of North Dakota's natural features, leads the reader to an unexpected twist by the end when she talks about the land's beauty and value. Perhaps, therefore, an audience can examine our own hatred of the

"boring" places we grew up,  
and for once think instead of  
how much they mean to us.

I have very little  
critical to say  
about this -  
It's a great essay

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