

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Great Plains Quarterly

Great Plains Studies, Center for

---

1991

## Review of Caprock Canyonlands: Journey into the Heart of the Southern Plains

Rudolfo A. Anaya

*University of New Mexico*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly>



Part of the [Other International and Area Studies Commons](#)

---

Anaya, Rudolfo A., "Review of Caprock Canyonlands: Journey into the Heart of the Southern Plains" (1991). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 596.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly/596>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Plains Studies, Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Quarterly by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

beautiful spring afternoon and I was glad for the fresh air. I remember seeing two sights I will never forget: one was living Texas longhorns in the brush, and the other was the beauty of the descent and drive through Palo Duro Canyon.

I thought West Texas was supposed to be flat and boring, and yet there I was, driving through one of the most exquisite canyons I had ever seen. I was born and raised in the llano of eastern New Mexico, in Santa Rosa along the Pecos River. I know that llano, the mesas of the escarpment, the canyon of the river. But I did not know about the caprock canyons of West Texas.

In *Caprock Canyonlands*, Dan Flores has dispelled our ignorance of the southern Plains forever. In this wonderfully narrated, personal odyssey of his treks through the canyons, he brings to life the land in which he lives. It is obvious it is a land he loves.

Flores joins a new and young breed of environmentalists who write about the Southwest. Like Charles Bowden, whose book *Killing the Hidden Waters* is a must for all of us, Flores captures the flavor of the land, its history, and the saga of the people who have lived on the land. These young men bring a humanism to their work. The problems inherent in saving our land for future generations to enjoy seem insurmountable, but with writers like Bowden and Flores one senses a ray of hope.

*Caprock Canyonlands* is a gripping book. I recommend it without reservations. It's a book we need to read if we are to help save the beauty of the southern Plains. Land and people come together, and Flores does an excellent job of showing the relationship of the Native Americans, the Mexicans, and the Anglo Americans to the land. People use water, and Flores shows us how we are misusing that unrenewable resource. The book is a call for action by the National Park Service to pay more attention to the great national asset we have in the West Texas canyons.

The book moved me; it has great merit. I have already recommended it to friends, and I have vowed to take a summer trip and see the canyons Flores describes so eloquently. This book

*Caprock Canyonlands: Journey into the Heart of the Southern Plains.* By Dan Flores. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990. Map, photographs, illustrations, selected bibliography, index. xi + 200 pp. \$22.95 cloth.

In the spring of 1984 Shelley Armitage invited me to lecture at West Texas State in Canyon, Texas. She and a colleague met me, and after dropping off my bags, they asked if I wanted to go for a ride to see a special place. It was a

is not only going to have a regional audience; it will create a much needed national debate on the preservation of the Southwest landscapes which we all love and hold dear.

RUDOLFO A. ANAYA  
Department of English  
University of New Mexico