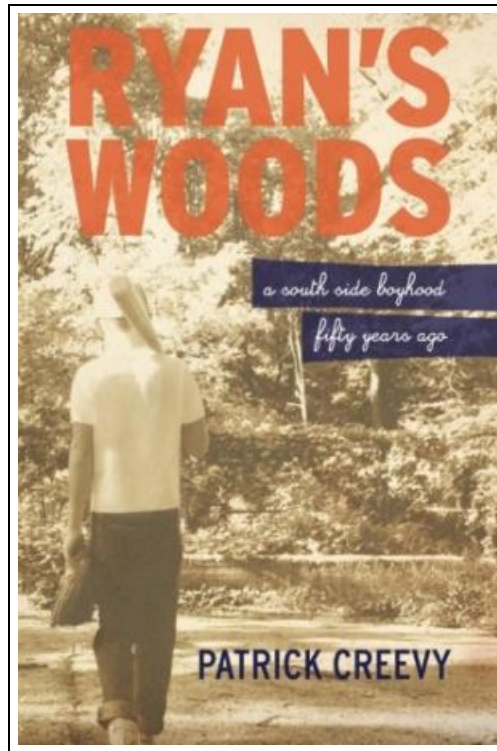


Ryans Woods: A South Side Boyhood Fifty Years Ago



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Reviews

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(Prof. Colton Jakubowski IV)

RYANS WOODS: A SOUTH SIDE BOYHOOD FIFTY YEARS AGO

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Amika Press. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Paperback. 352 pages. Dimensions: 7.9in. x 5.2in. x 0.9in. The year is 1962. The family of fourteen-year-old Kevin Collins, caught in white flight, has moved from Beverly, its South Side of Chicago neighborhood, to the city's northern suburbs. The field of Kevin's most formative boyhood adventures was Ryans Woods, the great South Side forest preserve, mysterious, beautiful, running along the city's western edge a full mile from 83rd Street to 91st. It now serves as the frame for his memories. Memories of a villain enemy, of games hard-fought as wars, of moments of fear or courage, of moments that transcend racial division, and of first love in all the pure strength of its innocence. Memories, still fresh, of best friendships that Kevin now feels will be forever unrecoverable. And memories especially of his greatest friend, Jackie Leonard, whose death at age thirteen has moved Kevin to turn memory into story. KIRKUS REVIEWS www.kirkusreviews.com In this raucous coming-of-age fable, a gang of Catholic schoolboys bonds, fights and absorbs tragicomic life lessons amid an urban arcadia. Kevin Collins is an average tween at Christ the King school on Chicago's southwest side circa 1960, but the titular municipal green space near his house seems nearly as full of mythic adventure as Sherwood Forest. The woods are an idyllic spot for sports, after-school forays and first kisses, though they also harbor more unsettling things: a tree on which a young boy hanged himself; a frightening nude man; the possibility of a violent ambush. Ranging through the forest with Kevin are his band of buddies, including manic prankster Frankie Malone and born-leader Jackie Leonard, a boy of such preternatural athletic talent, courage, empathy and grace that he's nothing short of a two-fisted playground saint. Also prowling about are...

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