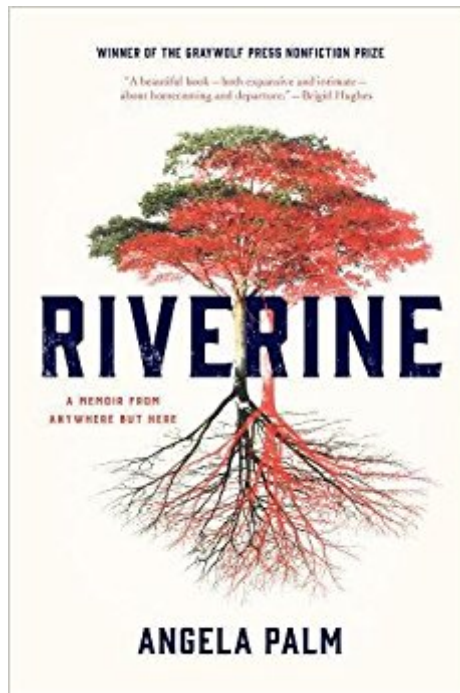




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# Riverine: A Memoir From Anywhere But Here



## Synopsis

Angela Palm grew up in a place not marked on the map, her house set on the banks of a river that had been straightened to make way for farmland. Every year, the Kankakee River in rural Indiana flooded and returned to its old course while the residents sandbagged their homes against the rising water. From her bedroom window, Palm watched the neighbor boy and loved him in secret, imagining a life with him even as she longed for a future that held more than a job at the neighborhood bar. For Palm, caught in this landscape of flood and drought, escape was a continually receding hope. Though she did escape, as an adult Palm finds herself drawn back, like the river, to her origins. But this means more than just recalling vibrant, complicated memories of the place that shaped her, or trying to understand the family that raised her. It means visiting the prison where the boy that she loved is serving a life sentence for a brutal murder. It means trying to chart, through the mesmerizing, interconnected essays of *Riverine*, what happens when a single event forces the path of her life off course.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

WINNER OF THE GRAYWOLF NONFICTION PRIZEA spellbinding memoir of place, young love, and a life-altering crime\*A Most Anticipated Book for 2016 by The Week\*\*A Chicago Tribune Summer Reading Pick\*“[A] perceptive memoir.”—Oprah.com, Powerful Memoirs by Powerful Women “Palm emerges from these pages as someone who holds on firmly to the first boy she ever fell in love with, someone who forges a new life for herself while never forgetting where she comes from. There’s a flickering beauty to her stubbornness, like the reflection

of late afternoon sun in a river. . . . Reading this tale, we can all remember lost loves and ponder the might-have-beens. *Washington Post* “[Riverine] beautifully examines the myriad ways nature and nurture mingle and mix to make us who we are as adults. . . . Riverine is a different kind of memoir, one that through a kind of sleight of hand transports readers from the narrative into the world of ideas and back again, with readers scarcely noticing the transitions. . . . In Riverine, Ms. Palm lucidly sets out to divine how two fates can bifurcate. The result is that rarest of things: a book that lays bare the lives that are lived and not lived. *The Wall Street Journal* “In Riverine one is reminded of Mary Karr. . . . One also thinks, when reading Palm, of Annie Dillard. . . . There is volumetric power here. Sizable intrigue in the sentences. Bold declarations that (as all memoir must) destabilize the reader and paralyze easy judgment on both the life lived and the words chosen. Angela Palm has left the river and returned to it. Angela Palm has arrived. *Chicago Tribune* “An incredibly personal and eloquent book. . . . Palm’s memoir is lifeline and letter to the parallel universes we so often wish for. Hers is a raw but wistful voice that embraces the imperfection of language as a reflection of the impossible question of what it means to be true to one’s self. *Star Tribune (Minneapolis)* “[Palm’s] lyrical prose swims intelligently through reflection and memory. . . . By laying bare the most intimate traverses of her own mind, Palm guides us towards empathy, asking readers to consider the depths of our compassion. *Brevity Magazine* “[Palm’s] writing is strong, quiet, and richly observed. . . . Riverine is an impressive debut intelligent, tender, forthright, insightful. . . . this is one writer we’ll be eager to hear from again. *Washington Independent Review of Books* “Riverine is lyrical, surprising, and evocative, and one of the year’s most powerful memoirs. *Largehearted Boy* “[Palm’s thoughts in Riverine are] well-put, often worth stopping and mulling over. *Newsday* “Palm shows her flaws unabashedly. This is a person you want to know, or maybe you feel like you come to know her, to love her even. This is a beautiful story of coping, survival. . . . She tells the most satisfying story of unrequited love that I’ve ever encountered. *Hazel & Wren* “Few American writers are attentive enough to class and its determinative power. Palm is one of them, her book filled with sharp analysis of the relationship between place, social status, and ethos. . . . Riverine is a strong first book. *Christian Science Monitor* “Haunting. . . . Densely symbolic, unsentimental, and eloquent, Palm’s book explores the connections between yearning, desire, and homecoming with subtlety and lucidity. The result is a narrative that maps the complex relationships that exist between individual identity and place. An intelligent, evocative, and

richly textured memoir. Kirkus Reviews, starred review “Combining lyrical prose with a haunting narrative, Graywolf Press Nonfiction Prize winner Palm recounts a story filled with secret longings, family history, and musings on what might have been. . . . This is a memoir to linger over, savor and study. Publishers Weekly, starred review “[Palm’s] writing is easy to read, compelling and draws the reader in with its momentum. Riverine is about self-determination, the origin of deviance, and places, particularly the liminal ones. . . . Palm’s story is yet unfinished, but her memoir has an admirable structure and art of its own. Shelf Awareness “Moving meditations on how memories continue to affect one’s ever-changing personality, however far away we may move.” Booklist “Palm’s prose takes the form of water. She flows through a history of family and environment that could’ve so easily been washed away and forgotten had she not been diligent in remembering and telling. Too dope. Yahdon Israel “Riverine digs deep into the soil of the past—river soil, corn field soil, flooded soil and stubborn soil—to find not only the roots of the future, in all of its mysterious convolutions and divergences, but also the possibility of futures that never came to pass. Angela Palm’s gorgeous candor sings urgently through these pages, her prose a tuning fork offering frequencies I’d never heard before. “Riverine is a beautiful book—both expansive and intimate—about homecoming and departure, the American ideal of reinvention and the ways we are bound to and bound by the past. Brigid Hughes, Graywolf Press Nonfiction Prize judge “Angela Palm’s Riverine is the stuff good memoir is made of: a personal narrative rich in metaphor and insight that finds meaning in those memories that confused us as children, made us squirm as adults. A truly lovely book crafted with exquisite language. “With a probing curiosity for the topography of both the land and the mind, Angela Palm maps out a world of deep quiet, loneliness, and sudden violence. Riverine reminds us that, while their land may be flat, the lives of those who populate our prairies and flood plains are anything but. “Will Boast, author of Epilogue “Angela Palm delivers a lyrical story—we come of age with her as she navigates a complicated landscape within and surrounding her. She breaks rules in life. She breaks rules on the page. Language is her essence here. There are sentences so arresting, I paused and paused and paused to absorb them. “Molly Caro May, author of The Map of Enough “Riverine is a stop-and-think kind of book, and a stay-up-all-night kind of book, as well, a quest for a place that isn’t quite there, but that grows more real page by

page, even as we rush to flee it. Angela Palm offers a fresh voice and shows us the heartland we're least likely to hear about, those fruited plains dotted with prisons and parties and families that don't quite fly, even as these chapters soar. A beautiful book, heartfelt but literary, blunt but poetic, moving and wise, funny, too.

—Bill Roorbach, author of *Temple Stream* and *Life Among Giants*

Angela Palm owns Ink + Lead Literary Services and is the editor of an anthology of Vermont writers, "Please Do Not Remove." Her work has appeared in "Paper Darts," "Midwestern Gothic," "Tampa Review," and elsewhere. She lives in Burlington, Vermont.

As someone originally from the Midwest, the symbolism resonated with my experience. It was a book club selection and our group has been together for some time - there was a good discussion. The line: "I go back to Indiana to recreate the pleasurable parts of my past." echos my experience when I return to Missouri.

This story was so touching and so well-written. The way water trickles through the plot is just beautiful. Palm has a strong voice throughout, a refreshing, unique POV, and a very interesting experience. A childhood crush on your next door neighbor is so relatable, but your crush generally doesn't go on to become a murderer as an adult. Palm guides the reader through this rare experience, step by step, thought by thought, and places them inside her shoes.

Good book! Especially meaningful to me, because I was raised on a farm in the area where author lived... but excellent read no matter where one is from. Family fun and stress, angst of growing up, universal. Will admit, at times I felt sorry for author's parents.

A beautifully written memoir filled with descriptive metaphors that transport you to my beloved Midwest. The true grit of the story ensures that you will not be disappointed.

The imagery, the sentences, the sense of place...this is a really striking and unforgettable read. Highly recommended.

This is an absolutely stunning book! I'm not from the midwest, but still felt a deep connection to Palm's hometown. Angela Palm is a master of description. I've been recommending this book to

everyone.

A beautifully written, compelling memoir! Palm delivers a very introspective analysis of her youth and how it shaped the adult she became. I look forward to anything else she writes!

Growing up poor along the river in Indiana, a first love who later is imprisoned for murder - a beginning that pulls you in immediately. Unfortunately, the remaining chapters develop in a repetitive, self indulgent fashion. Particularly annoying to me was the air of superiority adopted by the author - she is different, more intelligent and intellectual than those around her.

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