

## 17 Ways of Looking at the North Country

(inspired by Wallace Stevens' poem, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" and Gretel Ehrlich's *The Solace of Open Spaces*)

*The truest art I would arrive for in any work would be to give the page the same qualities as earth: weather would land on it harshly; light would elucidate the most difficult truths; wind would sweep away obtuse padding. Finally, the lessons of impermanence taught me this: loss constitutes an odd kind of fullness; despair empties out into an unquenchable appetite for life.*  
Gretel Ehrlich

### Landscape

Glaciers carved this valley, leaving boulders the size of bear cubs. When farmers moved them with oxen, some went mad; others fled for Ohio. A river weaves through each town—the Grass, the Oswegatchi, the Raquette—meeting the St. Lawrence Seaway to the north and the Hudson to the South. Big elms once shaded them, but they're all dead.