GILLETTE & L'ORÉAL,

WOMEN USA

VOL. V

North Carolina • North Dakota • Ohio • Oklahoma
Oregon • Pennsylvania • Rhode Island • South Carolina



FERDINANDO FREGA

AMERICA

The women in these books are not characters.
They are **industrial and cultural coordinates.**
They are the fractured points through which America is interpreted. A mother in Texas is not a mother in the Bronx. A worker in Ohio is not a worker in Los Angeles. A retiree in Florida is not a retiree in Montana. Women do not enter the chapters: **they determine them.**

ADULT — The Woman Inside Real America

She is the woman living during the storm: precarious work, racism, impossible rents, toxic relationships.
She is the most honest lens in contemporary America.

GIRLFRIEND — The Woman Inside the American Promise

Religion, closed communities, control, addictions.
This is the woman who lives under the illusion of a "better tomorrow" that America has been peddling for a century.

WIFE — The Woman Inside the Structure

Domestic patriarchy, domestic violence, forced roles.
This is the woman America celebrates in advertisements and abandons.

MOTHER — The Woman Who Rules the Country

Hereditary poverty, children raised in hardship, single mothers.
This is the invisible backbone of the United States.

WORKER — The Woman Who Keeps America Lit

Exhausting shifts, low wages, job discrimination.
It is women who sustain the economy while the economy ignores them.

UNEMPLOYED — The Woman Expelled from the System

Eviction, hunger, addictions, failures.
She is the woman America does not want to see because she tells the truth.

MIDDLE AGE — The Woman Who Has Seen It All

Loneliness, untreated illnesses, age discrimination.
This is the woman America considers "out of the market."

PENSIONER — The Invisible Woman

Elderly poverty, isolation, erased memories.
She is the woman who built the country and whom the country has forgotten.

WOMEN NEVER FORGOTTEN

This is not a list.
It is a map. A map of women who left marks that America tried to erase. There are no museum heroines: these are real lives. Every time someone says, "you can't," somewhere there was a woman who did it anyway. Memory is not nostalgia: it is resistance. And these five books serve only one purpose:
to put things back where they belong.

WOMEN OF THE UNITED STATES

FERDINANDO FREGA

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CHAPTER ZERO

Here, the world is not a territory: it is a limit.
The North Pole does not welcome, does not forgive, leaves no room for error. White reigns as an absolute entity, silent and without memory. Temperature is not meteorological data: it is a predator. The night lasts for months, crushing thoughts, distorting people's contours, swallowing their will.

The communities are few, small, and closed. Inuit, Yupik, Arctic peoples live where no one would choose to stay. Here, every individual is essential to the survival of the group. If you are not useful, you become a burden. And those who become burdens disappear into the silence, into the snow, into the logic of an environment that makes no concessions.

The scientific foundations add another kind of chill: that of hierarchies. Here, a woman is a rare presence, an anomaly who must adapt or succumb.

In this place, the concept of "disappearance" does not exist.
There is only the white that erases everything.

Inuit and Yupik women

The Arctic girl is not pampered: she is prepared.
She learns early to resist the cold, the darkness, and hunger. She must become useful to the clan, because here, identity is not personal. It is functional. The woman bears the burden of family and community: food, fire, children, skins, care. No one talks about rights. No one talks about fragility. Depression exists, but it has no name. Violence exists, but it has no witnesses.

Woman of the scientific bases

Educated, competent, accustomed to discipline. She arrives as a researcher, technician, and doctor. She quickly discovers that the

North Pole does not recognize qualifications. Here, only mental toughness counts. Male hierarchies dominate her, and any sign of weakness is interpreted as weakness. It is an environment where strength is not enough: extreme self-control is required.

Western “outside” woman

Raised in freedom, she arrives believing she can conquer the cold. But the place breaks her: solitude, tiny spaces, endless silences. Foundations are not communities, they are mechanisms. And a woman, inside a mechanism designed by men, must fight to avoid disappearing.

The Journey to the Edge of the World

My neighbor, Antonio, known as Nino, had been talking for years about the North Cape, the midnight sun, the months without darkness. It was a dream he kept in his pocket, like something impossible.
One morning in May, I rang his doorbell and said only this: "Pack your suitcase. I will be back in an hour. We'll be back in 30 days." He looked at me, surprised, happy. His wife, worried, asked what our plans were. "Chasing a dream," I replied.

We got in the car. Our wives looked at us like we were crazy. But this trip was real.
Nino was already full of questions. “Where are we going? How much money should I bring?” “Relax,” I told him. “We'll be there in 54 hours. Only 5,000 km. We are in the new Range Rover. Enjoy the ride.”

Every 300 km I had to stop: he, twelve years older than me, had his own rhythm.
I had water and liquids; he had coffee and physical needs. And the further we went, the more he talked about his life.

Things I would never have known if it had not been for that endless road.

Two men alone in a car always talking about women.
He had only met his wife. I laughed. I reassured him: "We're the same way."

He asked me how I managed to stay sane while driving 60 hours. I told him about Russia, when at 22 I drove 51 hours to meet a woman I had never met. "Distances aren't limits," I told him, “They are excuses. I've never had any."

The arrival in the white

We entered Norway.
A hostel on the road. We would leave the car there and continue by sled.

The guide was covered, impenetrable.
When she took off her glasses, I discovered she was a woman. A Norwegian woman, silent, direct, glacial. Nino in the center of the sled, she in front, me at 190 cm behind, bringing up the rear.

It was still daylight.
My watch showed the time, but it did not tell me whether it was night or morning. It was midnight sun. We had reached the North Cape.

Nino cried.
He hugged me. I said to him, laughing, “Be careful… people might think we’re gay.” We laughed, but we were at the edge of the world.

Then came the frost:
–52°C.

Entrance to the true Arctic

They took us to a metal container to change clothes.
Extremely heavy, padded suits, closed with complex zippers.

I paid for the guide.
Nino was left in an igloo with some men; I was left in another with a family: an elderly man, between 70 and 80, and three women between 30 and 50.

It was a closed world.
Simple. Brutal.

The man stood aside.
The women kept up the pace. And the bathroom was a hill five meters from the igloo: the poop froze before it hit the ground. My first pee became a yellow arctic star. It was the North greeting me.

The middle-aged woman, Magi, spoke a little English.
The rest were gestures, eyes, hands. The language of the cold.

When I was not sure how to use the suit, she, without thinking, touched my crotch to show me a hidden zipper.
There was no malice, no embarrassment: just function. Survival.

The three days in the igloo

They brought food.
Smoked fish, raw fish, cod liver, whale belly. And shark balls.
There was no choice. There was no alternative. It was what nature provides.

Then I drank:
a red liquid. I thought it was wine. It was filtered, boiled, sweetened whale blood. I drank it. It gave me a strength I had never felt before. A primal energy.

I thought it was cocaine.
No. It was the North entering the body.

The women watched me.
The old man went out hunting. I rested and drank blood. Three days without phone, internet, computer, without Nino. Just me and them.

There was no night.
Only light, fire, ice, and breath.

The three women lay down to sleep.
I looked for a place. The youngest raised her arm and motioned for me to come closer. They burst out laughing. I did not understand.
They said I was their "Christmas."

A way of saying I had been accepted.

I tried to give them some money to say thank you.
They refused. They just wanted a hug. And a few words in Calabrian to feel closer.

There I understood the value of true gifts:
those that cannot be bought or sold.

The guide's leave

After three days, the guide arrived.
She spoke with the three women for an hour. I was outside. I did not understand what they were saying. It was not my business. It was their language, their world, their law.

In the container, while I was undressing, the guide entered.
Curious. Direct. Nordic.

She hugged me tightly.
She kissed me. Her skin was as white as milk. Her eyes were as blue as the August sky.

She asked me to take her away.
She would have done anything to get out of that world.

I smiled respectfully.
I could not. I should not have.

I left her just one promise:
"If you need anything, write me a letter. I'll help you." She even refused the money. She was a beautiful woman, but lonely. A loneliness that cannot be seen from afar. A loneliness that the cold does not forgive.

The return home

We went to pick up Nino.
He was thrilled. He did not want to go back. But I had an appointment with his wife.

He told everyone about his three days.
I kept quiet. I never shared anything with the man. Only with paper.

And so, while Nino returned to his world,
I was already on my way to another. Another destination. Another encounter.

Welcome.

Epilogue

The North does not take you: it changes you. And it never gives you back whole.

Men come to the North Pole seeking light, silence, photographs, dreams.
Women stay to survive.

Men tell what they have seen.
Women keep silent about what they have experienced.

Men return.
Women stay. They remain in the cold, in houses of snow, in silences unheard. They remain to support communities that do not celebrate them. They remain to protect children, the elderly, strangers. They remain invisible.

I took only one memory from there:
a beautiful, incredibly beautiful woman, but alone. Not in a romantic sense. In a human sense. In a tragic sense.

Reflection

The North does not kill the body.
It kills presence. And what remains is white: a place where women live and disappear at the same time.

This is why I write.
Because extreme places do not tell their own story.
And those who travel through them cannot afford the luxury of remaining silent.

Not me. Not me. My land gave birth to me, and the rest of the world welcomes me not as a guest, but as one of the family.

From the absolute whiteness of the North, I descended into the absolute confusion of the United States.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The Impossible Assignment

Working for an American company for eighteen years gives you something no other company in the world can: a work culture, procedures, a clear mission, and a system of values that are not theory—they are daily practice. They do not explain them to you; they build them for you. And they do it without asking your permission.

I was in the New York office when I was offered a job I had never imagined.
Not a promotion. Not a transfer. An experiment.

A confidential program, created to validate a model of human relationships within the United States. They had not chosen managers, psychologists, or trainers. They had chosen people with a certain type of real-world experience. And my name came up—even though I had been in sales for eighteen years. They were not looking at the role: they were looking at the mind.

The test was simple to explain and exceedingly difficult to complete:

visit the 50 American states in one year,
choosing the cities myself and staying at least a week in each.

The last two weeks would be a forced vacation.
They would cover all the expenses. I just had to live, observe, understand, and submit a report every Monday. A human, dry, precise account.

I signed the contract.
I notified the house. They did not ask anything. They just wanted

to know if the monthly supplies had arrived. I was about to face a year in America. They, as always, were facing the next month.

To be on the safe side, my salary was deposited directly into my bank account in Italy.
It was a polite way of telling me: "Don't do anything stupid. Live with what you have. Let's see who you really are."

Only fifteen years later did I gain access to my original reports, the analyses, and the material they had collected about me. This book was born from there. I obtained approval to publish it, on one condition: never name the company that ordered it.

It does not matter.
This story is not about logos. It is about a man in a country impossible to understand unless you experience it firsthand.

Do I start from the furthest point?

The logical choice was to start from the margins, not the center. For two simple reasons:

1. I was fresh from the experiment: high lucidity, maximum attention.
2. By starting from the extreme I could correct the course and finish the journey cleanly.

I did not need to start in Boston or Chicago.
I had to start at a border. From a place that was America only on paper.

I chose Juneau, the capital of Alaska.
Isolated. Reachable only by boat or plane. A city that belongs to no one. The perfect place to start.

Optimize Resources

Before leaving, I did what an American respects primarily:
I organized myself like a professional, not like a tourist.

I called three of the most popular airlines, those with the largest domestic networks.
In less than an hour, I purchased a booklet of fifty domestic flights at a 60% discount.

No time limits.
No day limits. No restrictions. Just one condition: use them within a year.

I did the same with hotel chains, Uber Taxis, and car rental companies, and then prepared a proper schedule of the stages, the methods, but not the times.

I was ready.

It was my first real success.
The first sign was that I knew how to move. America rewards those who act, not those who wait.

When the company saw the transaction, they did what an American culture always does: they checked the reliability.

Was I able to manage a year of constant movement?
Was I able to deal with unexpected events, distances, and emergencies? Was I independent?

For this reason, before leaving, I fixed another crucial detail:

I made sure I had a monthly credit limit of at least $100,000 on my credit card.

It was not meant to be spent.
It was meant to demonstrate that we could manage them.

Americans think like this:
if you do not have autonomy, you do not have freedom. And if you do not have freedom, you cannot be evaluated.

From that moment on, the program was no longer an assignment. It was a mission.

AND NOW WE REALLY TRAVEL

Alaska is part of the United States only by geography. It is another world.

It is the place where women disappear without a trace.
Where a complaint never reaches its destination. Where cities are merely civilized islands in the middle of a savage continent.

Juneau was my first test:
a capital city with no roads connecting it to the rest of the country. A piece of America that does not feel like America.

Here I began to understand something: the journey would not be geographical.
It would be human.

BLOCK 1 (Volume I)

Alabama – Alaska – Arizona – Arkansas – California – Colorado – Connecticut – Delaware – Florida – Georgia

BLOCK 2 (Volume II)

Hawaii – Idaho – Illinois – Indiana – Iowa – Kansas – Kentucky – Louisiana – Maine – Maryland

BLOCK 3 (Volume III)

Massachusetts – Michigan – Minnesota – Mississippi – Missouri – Montana – Nebraska – Nevada – New Hampshire – New Jersey – New Mexico

BLOCK 4 (Volume IV)

New York – Washington

BLOCK 5 (Volume V)

North Carolina – North Dakota – Ohio – Oklahoma – Oregon – Pennsylvania – Rhode Island – South Carolina

BLOCK 6 (Volume VI)

South Dakota – Tennessee – Texas – Utah – Vermont – Virginia – West Virginia – Wisconsin – Wyoming

NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina is a state that lives on two tracks.
On one side is the "new America": university research, technology, startups, doctors, engineers, researchers, and modern, growing cities.

On the other hand, there is “old America”:
– poor countryside – isolated communities – heavy traditions – physical work – distant healthcare – still rigid roles.

They do not live together.
They ignore each other.

Women disappear here depending on where they are born:
– in modernity, due to pressure and competitiveness– in rurality, due to isolation and tradition– in medium-sized cities, due to

underpaid work and lack of services– in historical black communities, due to a double struggle: racial and gender.

North Carolina is polite on the surface
and fierce in detail.

The Woman of the Search Triangulum – 33 years old

Sara is a data analyst at a startup.
Studious, brilliant, and well-prepared,
she works in an environment that sells itself as progressive, "European," and modern.

The truth:
– long hours – endless expectations – goals that change every week – young managers who burn people out without realizing it – women who must try twice as hard to get half the recognition.

Sara studied, invested years, sacrificed her life and time.
And now she is in a system that applauds her and consumes her on the same day.

Her absence is professional:
she is essential to building the future, but she has no network to protect her.

The Rural Woman – 49 years old

A hundred kilometers from modernity, there is another North Carolina.
Distant houses, tobacco and soybean fields, long winters, harsh summers. Streets without sidewalks, without shops, without anything.

Linda lives in one of these areas.
She works part-time at a local store. She travels miles to everything: doctor, pharmacy, school, bank.

Her day is all on her shoulders:
– children – home – elderly people – work
– errands
– emergencies that she solves alone.

She cannot choose.
She cannot change. She cannot break the routine imposed by the miles.

Her absence is geographical:
she lives too far away to be seen.

The African American Woman from the Mid-City – 38 years old

Kim works at a call center in Charlotte.
She works with scripts, timers, metrics, and supervisors who monitor every break.

She has two children and a mother to care for.
The city is growing, companies are arriving, skyscrapers are rising. But real opportunities are not coming to her.

North Carolina talks about development,
but that development passes over Black communities without stopping.

Kim holds:
– emotionally draining work – children's schooling – daily exhaustion – rising costs – social mobility that does not really exist.

Her absence is racial and economic:
she is the pillar of the city, but she never rises to the top.

The Woman of the Coasts – 41 years old

Tanya lives on the coast.
The sea is beautiful, the houses are well-kept, and tourism is strong. But real life is something else.

Work in a resort:
– rooms – laundry – cleaning – tourist reception – long shifts – low wages

Summer is overloaded.
Winter is silence and accounts that do not add up.

Coastal North Carolina is photogenic,
but it relies on the toil of women who will never see that richness.

Her absence is economic:
everything revolves around tourism, but those who support it do not receive what is due.

Epilogue – North Carolina

North Carolina is a state divided by dynamics too far apart. Women pay the price everywhere: in technology that promises opportunities but no support, in the countryside that isolates, in cities that grow without inclusion, and in coasts that live on short and arduous seasons.

It is an erasure that is both modern and ancient.
Women are driving forces in every corner of the state, but the state considers them a necessary presence.

Reflection – North Carolina

Each state in the volume depicts a different form of absence. North Carolina illustrates the one born of **internal distance:** the gap between rich and poor, between city and countryside,

between new and old, between what the state promises and what it offers.

Woman always lives in the middle.
She is the line that unites worlds that do not speak to each other.
And precisely because she holds everything together, no one puts her at the center.

This chapter serves to state it without filters:
modernity, by itself, does not liberate anyone. We need to recognize those who truly support it.

NORTH DAKOTA

North Dakota is an unforgiving land.
Extreme winters, skin-slicing winds, long, empty roads, small, remote towns, invisible Native communities, and oilfields dominating the landscape.

It is a state where women live between two opposing forces: nature that commands and a society that does not change.

It is a place that rewards endurance more than happiness.
And within this logic, women disappear into the everyday details:
– in low-paid jobs
– in geographical solitude
– in the lack of services – in harsh family roles – in isolated communities – in the rhythms imposed by a male-dominated economy.

North Dakota is not bad.
It is rough. And in its roughness, many women are swallowed soundlessly.

The Oil Rig Woman – 35 years old

Jessica lives in Williston, Oil City.
She works as a coordination worker at a plant. She is one of the few women in a male-dominated facility, with heavy shifts, huge trucks, workshops, and constant noise.

Every day is a test:
– inappropriate jokes – useless comments – respect you must earn tenfold – risk at work – zero privacy.

The pay is good, but the human cost is enormous.
She has no real friends. She has no stable relationships. She has no support network.

Her absence is social:
surrounded by men, yet alone.

The Native Woman – 40 years old

Many Native communities in North Dakota live forgotten. Housing is scarce, opportunities are lacking, schools are weak, and hospitals are far away. Native women carry a legacy of wounds that the state has never healed.

Alana has four children.
She works part-time at a community center. The history of her people is written everywhere: in their faces, in their silences, in their absences.

The problems are constant:
– unemployment – widespread addictions – almost non-existent state support – fragile infrastructure – social depression.

Her absence is historical and structural:
culture is strong, but the present ignores it.

The Woman of Tiny Towns – 50 Years

North Dakota is made up of towns that do not appear on maps.
Five roads, a school, a church, and a gas station.

Karen lives in one of these.
She works in a small grocery store. Every day she sees the same people, the same gestures, the same conversations.

To find a hospital, they must drive an hour.
To find a different job, even longer. To find something even remotely new, it takes two hours.

Her absence is geographical:
sshe has no alternatives. Her life is defined by the place where she lives.

The Woman of the Agricultural Frontier – 47 years old

Megan lives in the most agricultural region of the state.
Endless fields, tractors, crops, snow that falls too early.

Work on the farm:
– animals – tools – stables – maintenance – accounts – cooking – family – emergencies to always manage.

The farm woman here carries more than double the weight she appears to.
And arms, mind, management, backbone. But it is all described as "farm help."

Her absence is cultural:
it does everything but is never recognized as a central part of the economy.

Epilogue – North Dakota

North Dakota is a state that does not protect.
It demands strength, it demands resistance, it demands patience. The woman responds with total commitment, but the state does not respond to her.

From the oil rig to the native reserve,
from tiny villages to isolated farms, women do not disappear they are absorbed by the territory, as if their presence were taken for granted.

Reflection – North Dakota

Every absence has a cause.
In North Dakota, the cause is the **land itself:**
large, harsh, remote, inefficient, masculine in its economy, slow in its change.

The woman lives in a landscape that has no room for fragility, in a society that considers her toil an inevitable part of the scenery.

It is not invisible because it is not valid:
it is invisible because the land here is bigger than the people.

And this chapter serves to remind us:
strength is not a choice. In some places it is the only option.

OHIO

Ohio is a mirror of the silent America.
It is a state of collapsed industrial cities, directionless suburbs, empty families, fleeing youth, and jobs that no longer guarantee anything. It is a land that once produced everything and now produces expectations: expectation of a better future, expectation

of an opportunity that never arrives, expectation of change that moves slowly, at a standstill.

The woman here holds together parts that should be supported by the state:
– broken families – unstable incomes – communities wounded by drugs – houses falling to pieces – schools struggling – saturated social services.

Ohio does not kill the woman.
It takes her breath away. Slowly, silently, a little bit each day.

The Woman of the Collapsed Industrial City – 46 years old

Michelle lives in Cleveland, in a neighborhood that was once bustling with work.
Her father worked in a factory. Her grandfather, too. Then everything changed: relocations, closures, bankruptcies.

Now she works in a supermarket:
variable shifts, low pay, no security. Every month she must do surgical calculations to avoid bankruptcy.

The house is old, the neighborhood is fragile, the opportunities are few.

Her absence is economic and generational:
it lives at the precise point where an entire industrial identity collapsed, taking with it the women who were unable to choose a different future.

The Woman Who Raises a Family During the Opioid Crisis – 38 Years Old

Ohio is one of America's capitals of the opioid epidemic. Pharmaceutical companies, complacent doctors, fragile communities: a slow explosion that has devastated entire families.

Emily lives in Dayton.
Her husband died of a drug overdose three years ago. She has two children and works as a receptionist at a clinic. Every day she sees familiar faces: desperate mothers, broken young people, fathers who did not make it.

Ohio talks about the "opioid crisis."
She talks about absence: a man lost, a family broken, a burden falling entirely on her shoulders.

Her absence is emotional and social:
it keeps children home, and work afloat, while the system that created the problem does nothing to fix it.

The Poor White Suburban Woman – 28 years old

Samantha lives in a suburb that seems to have come out of a dull movie:
Walmart, gas stations, prefabricated houses, fast food restaurants, endless parking lots.

She works at a McDonald's.
Repeated shifts, automatic movements, nervous customers, and monthly changes in management. She earns enough to survive, but never enough to grow.

Her mother no longer works.
Her partner is on and off. She has dreams she does not know where to put them.

Her absence is communal:
she is surrounded by people in the same situation, and this makes the effort even more invisible.

No one sees what is normal for too many.

The Woman of the Agricultural Area – 54 years old

Outside the cities, there is an Ohio that lives off agriculture, small livestock, and physical labor.
Here, women take care of everything: accounting, animals, crops, children, the elderly, and the home.

Linda lives on a farm near Lancaster.
Her children are grown, her husband works outside, and she stays behind to manage everything the land requires.

She works seven days a week, in hot, cold, rain, and snow.
There is no day off. There is no mental respite. There is no recognition.

Her absence is cultural:
it is taken for granted that the agricultural woman "makes it." Yes, she made it. But the price is always hers.

Epilogue – Ohio

Ohio is a state that has had much taken away from it,
and has learned to take away from those who have the least voice.

Women here do not ask for miracles.
They ask for stability, protection, real opportunities. They receive fragments of them.

From fallen industrial cities
to opioid-ridden neighborhoods, to white suburbs with no future,
to farmlands that never rest women hold together what the state no longer supports.

Reflection – Ohio

The absence of women in Ohio is not the result of a single cause. It is the result of a combination of all the breakdowns: economic, social, health, family, and community.

Here the woman lives in the fracture between what Ohio was and what it can no longer become.

It is an absence that does not make any noise,
because it has become normal.

And the task of these pages is precisely this:
to make the invisible visible, to give a face to those who sustain everything without ever being named.

OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma lives in constant tension between past and present.
It is a state filled with land, wind, churches, rural communities, mid-sized cities undergoing transformation, and an indigenous heritage that the state has only half-recognized.
It is a land that has been battered by every kind of storm: economic, climatic, social, and cultural.

And every storm always falls on the same shoulders: those of women.

In Oklahoma, women are walled into rigid roles, crushed by widespread poverty, rendered invisible by a religion that speaks much of family but little of real protection.
It is a state that thrives on resistance, and women are its most worn-out pillars.

The Woman of the Bible Belt – 32 years old

Hannah was born into a world where everything was already decided:
how to dress, how to speak, how to behave, what to believe, what to avoid.

Family, community, church:
three concentric circles that define her life.

She has a husband, two children, and a modest home.
Her day is marked by: – children's school – grocery shopping – church – mandatory volunteer work – family duties – zero mental space.

She cannot express doubts.
She cannot truly choose.
She cannot leave the cage without being judged as a traitor to the community.

Her absence is cultural and spiritual:
she lives in constant presence, but as a functional figure, not as a full person.

The Native Woman – 45 years old

Oklahoma has one of the largest Native American populations in the country.
But the gap between culture and prosperity is enormous.

Kayla is a member of the Cherokee Nation.
She works at a cultural center. She keeps the language, traditions, rituals, and stories alive.

Outside that world, however, the reality is harsh:
– underpaid schools – fragile healthcare – widespread addictions – poorly paid jobs – subtle and constant discrimination.

She supports community, family, and identity.
And no one protects her as she deserves.

Her absence is historic:
the State built its identity on native peoples and then left them alone.

The Woman from Tornado-Hit Areas – 39 Years Old

Oklahoma is one of the states most affected by tornadoes.
It can happen every year, every season. And when it does, it obliterates everything.

Rachel lives in a repeatedly affected area.
She has lost two homes in her life: one as a child, one as an adult.

She works as a teacher.
And every year she must train her students for exercises: hiding, protecting themselves, ignoring the sound of fear.

Her life is made of reconstructions:
of houses, of routine, of stability.

Her absence is climatic:
nature rules here, and those who pay the consequences are always the families, that is, the women.

The Low-Income Woman – 29 years old

Brooklyn—a common name in the area, not a city—
lives in a suburb of Tulsa. Old houses, broken roads, buses that pass whenever they want.

She works at a fast-food restaurant.
Split shifts, last-minute schedule changes, minimal pay. She has a three-year-old daughter. Daycare costs more than her salary. She has two options: leave the child with someone she does not trust or lose her job.

Her world is made up of:
– overdue bills – food stamps – running
– constant anxiety
– small but never realizable dreams.

Her absence is economic and systemic:
Oklahoma pushes those who have already made it and leaves behind those born in these suburbs.

Epilogue – Oklahoma

Oklahoma is a state that seems simple,
but it is one of the hardest to live in.

Women are prisoners of three immense forces:
– religion that traps them – poverty that drains them – climate that destroys them.

Every reconstruction, every rescue, every fragile balance
passes through her. But the State rarely gives anything back.

Reflection – Oklahoma

Oklahoma's female absence stems from a dangerous mix:
strong tradition, persistent poverty, invisible Native identities, and an unforgiving nature.

Here the woman lives in a constant contradiction:
being indispensable and being ignored.

This chapter demonstrates one thing clearly:
hardship is not justice. Resistance is not freedom. Survival is not progressing.

And in Oklahoma, too often, women do not live:
they resist.

OREGON

Oregon thrives on the most subtle contradiction in the United States:
a clean, green, liberal image, perfect for tourists and political campaigns, and a social reality full of deep cracks.

Portland, celebrated as a progressive city,
is also a huge center of homelessness, addiction, mental health crisis, and growing inequality. Outside Portland, Oregon is changing isolated countryside, extremely poor white communities, unstable jobs, minimal resources, and latent tensions.

The woman here disappears not because of a lack of role,
but because of overload:

– single-income families
– partner dependencies – lack of services – geographical isolation
– precarious work – excessive costs – lack of real protection

Oregon is beautiful to look at,
but tough to live in.

The Portland Woman – 29 years old

Julia lives on Portland's East Side.
She works at a health food store, barely pays rent, and shares a house with two other people.

Portland presents itself as an “open, sensitive, social” city,
but the truth is made up of: – streets full of homeless people – mental health crisis everywhere – clogged services – low-wage jobs – constantly rising rents.

Julia is one of those people the city uses as a symbol of its "youthful spirit,"
but treats her like an anonymous number.

Her absence is social:
it is everywhere in the discussions, but nowhere in the solutions.

The Immigrant Woman in the Restaurant Industry – 34 Years Old

Rosa arrived from Guatemala.
She works in the kitchen of a restaurant that is always busy, always noisy, always tense.

Ten hours a day, six days a week.
Low pay, no insurance, constant sweat, heat, and noise.

Many male colleagues believe they can joke around however they want.
They do not do it out of malice; they do it out of ignorance and tradition. But it weighs on her. She is consumed by comments, glances, and harsh jokes.

Outside of work, she sends money to her relatives.
Inside, she keeps everything afloat.

Her absence is economic and cultural:
it makes an entire sector go round but remains invisible to everyone.

The Rural Woman – 52 years old

In eastern Oregon, there are towns that seem stuck in 1985.
Few houses, long roads, harsh winters, and spotty phone service.

Karen lives in one of these.
She has a small farm, a few animals, and a side job in a shop. She does everything herself.

When you need a doctor, you must drive an hour.
When you need any service, you must schedule days in advance.
When something goes wrong, there is no one there.

Her absence is geographical:
she lives far from the world, and not by choice.

The Woman Who Supports a Family Destroyed by Addiction – 43 Years Old

Oregon is one of the states with the highest rates of addiction.
Opioids, methamphetamines, alcohol. A slow avalanche that never stops.

Tessa has a partner who's now lost.
Two young children. A job as a cashier in a supermarket. Every day she must protect the children, deal with a man she no longer recognizes,
keep the books together,
and fight against a system that offers no solutions.

Her absence is institutional:
society has been talking about a "crisis" for years, but nothing changes for those experiencing it at home.

Epilogue – Oregon

Oregon is a state that advertises itself well,
but protects itself poorly.

Women live between two extremes:
– an aesthetic progressivism – an aggressive social reality.

It is she who withstands the impact of inequality,
who supports fragile families, who works in the most exploited sectors, who supports communities forgotten by politics.

Oregon's beauty is not enough to save it.

Reflection – Oregon

The absence of women in Oregon stems from a stark truth:
simply saying you are modern is not enough to be so.

Women here pay three prices:
– the cost of living – precarious work – social and geographical isolation.

It is an absence that does not arise from direct conflict,
but from general disinterest.

And this chapter makes it clear:
behind the woods, the mountains, the perfect lakes,
there is an America that does not work.
And that weighs entirely on women.

PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania is one of America's most divided states.
On one side, the great cities—Philadelphia and Pittsburgh—steeped in history, inequality, incomplete rebirths, and communities still bearing open scars. On the other hand, a rural and conservative hinterland, farms, closed mines, stagnant towns, and old-fashioned mentalities.

Here women disappear in four ways:
– in the poor suburbs – in African American communities marked by violence – in the stagnant countryside – in the modern cities that consume them.

Pennsylvania is a state that does not forgive those born with little.
And women, as always, are the ones who pay the highest price.

The Woman from the Poor Suburbs of Philadelphia – 34 years old

Shan lives in North Philadelphia.
It is a tough neighborhood, with struggling schools and streets where you can feel the tension even in broad daylight.

She works at a discount store.
She has a six-year-old daughter. Every morning, she walks her to school with a mixture of hope and fear: hope that she will have a better future, fear that the neighborhood will swallow her up.

Wages are low, costs are high, services are insufficient.
The city celebrates its "revival," but the revival never reaches her home.

Her absence is urban:
it lives at the precise point where the city decides who deserves attention and who does not.

Pittsburgh's Rust Belt Woman – 48 years old

Pittsburgh has become "tech," "university," and "innovative."
But the working-class city has not disappeared: it has just moved to the suburbs, where no one looks.

Linda was a welder.
When the factory closed, she only found part-time jobs: supermarkets, cleaning, and service.

The economic transformation has rewarded highly educated young people.
Not women like her.

Her absence is industrial:
the new city did not provide a place for those who built the old one.

The Rural Woman – 55 years old

Outside the cities, Pennsylvania is another country:
hills, farms, tiny towns, churches everywhere, a mentality that has not changed for generations.

Mary grew up here.
She has a house, a plot of land, a husband who works occasionally, and grown children.

She does everything:
– house
– animals
– bills – cooking – caring for the elderly – acting as a bridge between families.

She is respected, sure.
But as a function, not as an individual.

Her absence is cultural:
every role is already written.

The Allentown Immigrant Woman – 37 years old

Allentown is full of Latino, African, Arab, and Asian immigrants.
The economy relies on them.

Rime works in a factory, morning shift.
Her husband works the night shift. They see only a few hours a day.

The pay is never enough,
the work is physical, the assembly lines are noisy and relentless.

She speaks two languages,
raises three children, and works double shifts when necessary.

Her absence is economic and linguistic:
it is an indispensable presence in the city, but it does not exist for those who make decisions.

Epilogue – Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania is a state that lives in the middle:
half modern, half stuck,
half rich, half poor,
half progressive, half stuck in the past.

Women live in the cracks.
And they hold together everything that's crumbling families, schools, neighborhoods, fragile economies.

But the system considers her an extra,
never a protagonist.

Reflection – Pennsylvania

The absence of women in Pennsylvania arises from **internal distance:**
the distance between what the state was and what it would like to be.

The big cities consume,
the countryside shrinks, the middle economies let go.

The woman ends up squashed in the center,
where no one really looks.

This chapter makes it clear:
fatigue is not a one-day emergency, it is the daily norm for thousands of women.

RHODE ISLAND

Rhode Island is a miniature of everything that works and everything that breaks in America:
– expensive coastal cities – poor suburbs – vanished industry – huge migrant communities
– limited services
– glaring social contrasts.

Providence is its center: cultural, academic, and artistic.
But alongside the universities lies some of the most underrated urban poverty in the East. Outside the city, small towns survive on minimal jobs, seasonal seafaring, and industries that fail to return.

The woman here disappears by **compression:**
everything costs too much, everything is too close, everything is too small to escape.

The Latina Woman of Providence – 30 years old

Marisol lives on the South Side, one of the city's poorest neighborhoods.
She works cleaning offices at dawn and restaurants at night. Two jobs, no security.

Providence likes to call itself a "creative city."
For it, creativity simply means making ends meet.

She has no insurance.
She has no vacation time. She has no margin.

Her absence is economic and linguistic:
sshe works as hard as three people, but for the State she is a statistic.

The student-Working Woman – 22 years old

Brown University attracts students from all over the world.
But those from modest families experience a different Rhode Island.

Rachel studies sociology,
works in a library, works as a bartender on weekends, and shares an overpriced studio apartment.

She is intelligent, capable, determined,
but she is under enormous pressure: – study – work – debt – uncertain future.

Her absence is academic:
the university celebrates diversity but does not protect those who combine study and survival.

The Seasonal Coast Woman – 41 years old

Newport is beautiful for those who visit.
A disaster for those who live there year-round.

Tanya works in the summer at a restaurant on the harbor.
In the winter, she looks for any available work: shops, cleaning, small contracts.

Rich tourists,
poor residents.

Her absence is seasonal:
she is indispensable for three months, invisible for the other nine.

The Small-Town Woman – 54 years old

Outside Providence lies a forgotten Rhode Island:
old textile mills, red buildings, weathered streets.

Linda works in an industrial laundry.
Repetitive movements, hot steam, never-ending shifts.

The wages are minimal,
the work is hard, the future remains unchanged.

Her absence is industrial:
it works in the shadow of an economic past that will never return.

Epilogue – Rhode Island

Rhode Island is small,
but its problems are huge: high rents, low wages, limited opportunities.

Women live crushed by all this.
Always on the front lines, never protected.

Reflection – Rhode Island

The absence of women here arises from a paradox:
a tiny state, unable to protect anyone.

It is an absence made of micro spaces and micro-chances:
too small to climb, too narrow to escape.

And in these suffocated spaces,
women govern an entire state that considers them part of the landscape.

SOUTH CAROLINA

South Carolina is a state of stark contrasts:
perfect beaches and extreme poverty,
colonial history and still-poverty black communities,
growing cities and stagnant suburbs, picture-perfect tourism, and low-paying jobs.

It is one of the places where women bear the greatest burden, between tradition, religion, family, prohibitive costs, and poor services.
And it is also one of the countries where women's freedom is still debated, limited, and controlled.

South Carolina dresses well when it needs to,
but its backbone is held up by women who no one sees.

The African American Woman of Lo Country – 36 years old

Amina lives in Charleston, in a Gullah Geechee community.
She carries a huge cultural legacy: a history of slavery, resistance, and identity maintained despite everything.

She works in a tourist restaurant downtown.
She serves dishes inspired by her culture to people who know nothing about its history.

She is a mother, a daughter, and a worker.
She works long shifts, pays high wages for the city but low wages for living here, because Charleston has become too expensive for those born there.

Her absence is historical and urban:
the history of black people here is the basis of everything, but it remains outside the official narrative.

The White Woman of the Conservative South – 42 years old

Megan lives in a rural area between Anderson and Greenwood.
Her family is conservative, the church is central, and the community is closed. Here, the rules are not written, but they are stricter than the law.

Her husband works in construction,
she works as a cashier in a department store.

Every choice is weighed:
how to dress, what to say, what to think. Divorce is considered a scandal. Not having children is a sin. Asking for autonomy is a "lack of faith."

Her absence is cultural:
it lives in a role decided by others, and changing it means losing everything.

The Tourism Woman in Myrtle Beach – 29 years old

Jamie works at a hotel on the coast.
Front desk in the summer, cleaning in the winter, whatever the need arises.

Myrtle Beach seems like a paradise for those who visit,
but it is a cage for those who work there: low wages, high rents, total seasonality, zero stability.

Jamie lives in a small, shared apartment.
She works six days a week. And when the season ends, she must hope for a mild winter.

Her absence is economic:
everything revolves around tourists; nothing revolves around residents.

The Uninsured Woman – 55 Years Old

South Carolina is one of the states with the least access to healthcare.
Many working women are uninsured. Many forgo essential care.

Linda works as a cleaner at a clinic.
She sees healthcare from the inside every day, but she cannot afford it for herself.

She has chronic pain in her hands,
but she cannot stop. She is afraid of a medical checkup because she knows she cannot afford the treatment.

Her absence is a health issue:
sshe works around the care of others and has no right to her own.

Epilogue – South Carolina

South Carolina is a state that lives in constant tension between modernity and tradition,
between visible wealth and hidden poverty.

Women pay for all the contradictions:
– rigid religion – closed roles – exploitative tourism – deep-rooted racism – inaccessible healthcare – too low wages.

It is a supporting column,
but it is treated as a small decoration.

Reflection – South Carolina

Here, the absence of women arises from the perfect intertwining of:
burdensome history, dominant religion, and a fragile economy.

Women live trapped between past and present:
the past limits them,
the present consumes them,
and the future is not guaranteed.

And this chapter serves to expose the naked truth:
South Carolina is not slow because it wants to be. It is slow

because it does not want to change. And those who pay for this inaction are always women.