



Tom Till Photography is celebrating its 35th anniversary this year!

AND...the Tom Till Gallery is 15 years old

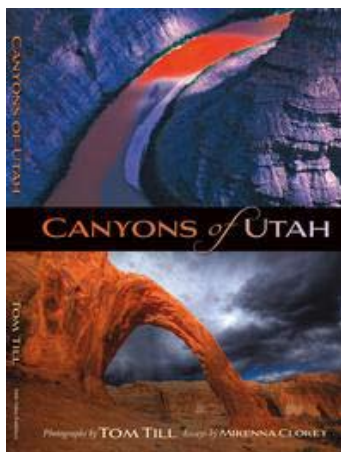
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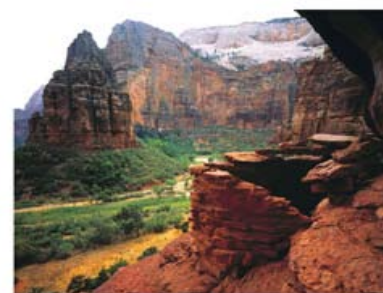
<http://www.tomtill.com/publishers/index.cfm>



<http://www.tomtill.com/gallery/index.cfm>



Tom Till is proud to present his 15th book depicting the wonders of Utah. Canyons of Utah is a stunning presentation with the kind of unique imagery that has made Till Utah's photographer laureate. Till's photographs offer a new vision of the Southern Utah National Parks, and glimpses of wilderness areas few have seen. From the burning reds of the Colorado River in flood to the lush greens of Zion Narrows, Canyons of Utah is a celebration of color and drama, photographed in Till's inimitable style--35 years in the making. Complementing the photographs are four essays by Till's writer/daughter Mikenna Clokey, with subjects as diverse as meteor impacts, amazing archeological finds, and bear attacks on human visitors to the wilderness. Canyons of Utah will find a treasured place on your Tom Till bookshelf. Full color, softbound, 138 pages, 110 photographs.



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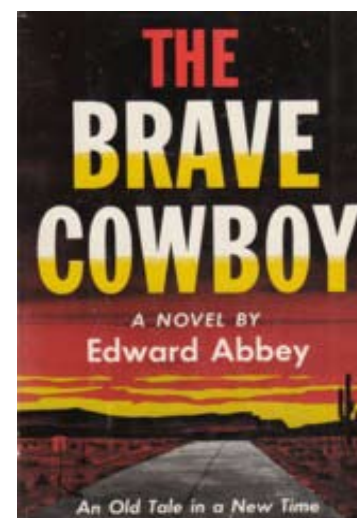
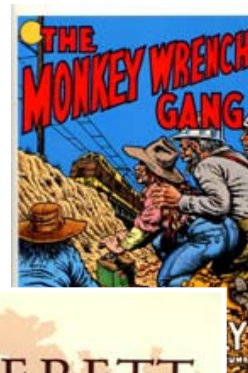
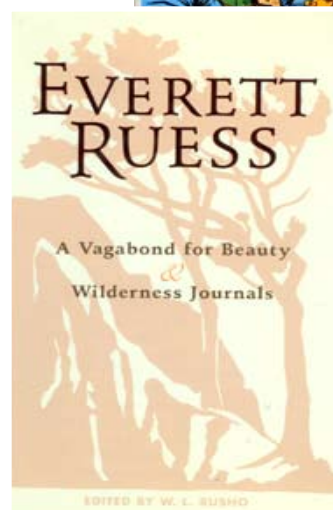
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POINT BLANK
RETURN TO PERFECTO

EVAN CANTOR

Everyone has a favorite campsite. Whether it dates from a happy childhood, undergraduate hi-jinks or racial memory from pre-historic humanity makes no difference. If you're lucky, you have a favorite secret campsite, one that will hopefully remain unknown forever.

In a strangely Native American sense, we sign no deeds of mortgage to possess such secret places, yet we call them our own. And we are outraged when they are discovered. I am no exception. Mine once belonged to Perfecto Martinez.

Once upon a time, near the tiny Mormon hamlet of Moab, there were no National Parks, no river-runners, no hordes of RVs, no masses of hikers, bikers, jeepers, and tourists. The vast canyonlands were inhabited by a few Mormon settlers, a handful of outlaws, Native Americans, and the occasional hardy soul providing a basis for modern cowboy mythology. Perfecto was one of those hardy souls.

In 1921, he staked his claim to my favorite secret campsite by carving name-and-date on a huge boulder. The valley, bounded by soaring red cliffs, was probably overgrazed then as now. Perfecto ran sheep or cattle out of a settlement called "Valley View," now an empty sagebrush flat, working for some honcho who sent him out to do the round-up. In those days, there was a reservoir at the mouth of the valley. I can barely imagine where the water originated because this place is dry as a bone and the nearby La Sal mountains contribute nothing more than a nice view.

But those were rainy years on the Plateau. By the time Perfecto signed his name on the rock, the wettest twenty had just ended and the Colorado River would soon be apportioned accordingly. Although the valley floor is bare from overgrazing, there are no cowpies up in the rocks. A huge white slickrock mass rises just south of camp, the view from which is, as you might imagine, expansive. Around a corner, tucked in a bend of the ridge, is a series of slots and cracks, generally untouched by people and livestock. An old jeep track fades into the area, but it doesn't go far enough for bikers or jeepers. It's simply not on the map.

Perfecto may have spent quiet evenings here watching golden sunsets over distant plateaus, marveling at the beauty of the land, but still, he had a job to do. He wasn't here to renew his spirit, to revitalize a world-weary soul or simply escape the rat-race for a day.

Cowboying was, and remains, hard, dusty, ass-crunching, back-breaking work.

Curious about Perfecto's pedigree, I did some poking around. I found eleven persons named Perfecto Martinez, most of them in Texas. One, Perfecto Martinez III, teaches at the University of Texas. He did not respond to my polite inquiries. Over the years, others, like Tom Baldwin, laid claim to Perfecto's campsite by carving their name on the rock. There are a few Baldwins living in Moab to this day, but none remember Tom. In 1956, Dave Oliver left what must have been the crowning glory of his life, name-and-date in huge block-letters accompanied by a naked woman glyph. In the larger scheme of things, it is a tasteful graffito.

But to me, it will always be Perfecto's campsite. I'm afraid it won't be long until the hordes catch up. Last Spring, I encountered a lone woman in a VW micro-bus camped conspicuously on a small hilltop not far from Perfecto's camp. She had colorful banners waving

in the breeze. She asked if we were going into Moab, and, if so, would we mind picking up some water for her? "Sorry," I said, "we're not going into town." It was 105 degrees Fahrenheit. She was gone the next day. Lack of services had presumably driven her off. I can only pray that it will stay that way. As Utah's canyonlands become increasingly discovered country, places like this grow ever more precious.

I cannot, will not, tell you where it is. I can only

vouchsafe that it is still there. If a secret spot is something you need, you'll have to go out and find one yourself. It wouldn't be the same if a guidebook or chatty column writer showed you the way. To possess a secret spot, you must earn it the hard way. In so doing, you will find something no guidebook can ever give you: the true experience and satisfaction of solitude. Don't even tell your friends...

The drawing is by Mr. Cantor and has nothing to do with the place he just spoke of. If you find perfecto, say nothing. Tell no one, or face the wrath of the author.

He can be reached, when he feels like it, at:

www.evancantor.com

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