

## Exit Zero: Family and Class in Postindustrial Chicago

*Christine J. Walley*

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**Christine J. Walley : Exit Zero: Family and Class in Postindustrial Chicago** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Exit Zero: Family and Class in Postindustrial Chicago:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Interesting and well-documented studyBy Norma Desmond2009I found this study of life among the steel workers of Chicago's Southeast side or great interest. Ms. Wally takes a multifaceted look at varying opinions within the groups which she studies and does not omit some bits of data because they might not fit a prior theory or a romanticized view of the steel mill community. There are few studies that bridge the gap, as Exit Zero does, between biography, auto-biography, and sociology with focus upon what happens after the

TV cameras turn away from a region that has been affected by massive mills closures. The question of what constitutes dignity in a diminished economic environment is--or should be--of interest to sociologists everywhere. Quoting the poet William Blake, And did the Countenance Divine Shine forth upon our clouded hills? And was Jerusalem builded here Among these dark Satanic Mills? Bring me my bow of burning gold! Bring me my arrows of desire! Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold! Bring me my charriot of fire! Walley has her Chariot and we await more scholarship in this needed area from her. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. excellent auto-ethnography By CJ Walley has combined thick ethnography, family history, and insightful anthropology in this auto-ethnography of the deindustrialization of the steel mill area of SE Chicago. She's told this through the lens of her family, her father and mother, her relatives and neighbors, her own life. Well written, well thought. Very hard to not just read right through to the end 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. She was very fortunate and the story very real By John P. Durbin Having known one person From same area and roughly author's age, She was very fortunate and the story very real!

Winner of CLR James Book Prize from the Working Class Studies Association and 2nd Place for the Victor Turner Prize in Ethnographic Writing. In 1980, Christine J. Walley's world was turned upside down when the steel mill in Southeast Chicago where her father worked abruptly closed. In the ensuing years, ninety thousand other area residents would also lose their jobs in the mills—just one example of the vast scale of deindustrialization occurring across the United States. The disruption of this event propelled Walley into a career as a cultural anthropologist, and now, in *Exit Zero*, she brings her anthropological perspective home, examining the fate of her family and that of blue-collar America at large.

“Walley . . . writes her book as an autoethnography. This is a form that uses the author's personal experience and reflection as a lens through which to view broader cultural and political trends. It proves to be an effective way of tackling a number of thorny issues like the politics of industrial decline, gender roles in working-class families, racism in white blue collar neighborhoods and the physical and psychic markers of class in America with both clarifying insight and humanizing compassion. Walley's willingness to dive headfirst into questions about the nature of persistent economic segregation seems especially necessary in today's post-Occupy environment where issues of inequality are understood to be important yet still seem unable to be truly addressed.”