



The Ellis Island Snow Globe (a John Hope Franklin Center Book)

Erica Rand

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In *The Ellis Island Snow Globe*, Erica Rand, author of the smart and entertaining book *Barbie's Queer Accessories*, takes readers on an unconventional tour of Ellis Island, the migration station turned heritage museum, and its neighbor, the Statue of Liberty. By pausing to reflect on what is and is not on display at these two iconic national monuments, Rand focuses attention on whose heritage is honored and whose obscured. She also reveals the shifting connections between sex, money, material products, and ideas of the nation in everything from the ostensible father-mother-child configuration on an Ellis Island golf ball purchased at the gift shop to the multi-million dollar July 4, 1986 Liberty Weekend extravaganza celebrating the Statue's centennial just days after the Supreme Court's un-Libertylike decision upholding the antisodomy laws challenged in *Bowers v. Hardwick*.

Rand notes that portrayals of the Statue of Liberty as a beacon for immigrants tend to suppress the Statue's connections to people brought to this country by force. She examines what happened to migrants at Ellis Island whose bodies did not match the gender suggested by the clothing they wore. In light of contemporary ideas about safety and security, she examines the "Decide an Immigrant's Fate" program, which has visitors to Ellis Island act as a 1910 board of inspectors hearing the appeal of an immigrant about to be excluded from the country. Rand is a witty, insightful, and open-minded tour guide, able to synthesize numerous diverse ideas—about tourism, immigration history, sexuality, race, ethnicity, commodity culture, and global capitalism—and to candidly convey her delight in her Ellis Island snow globe. And pen. And lighter. And back scratcher. And golf ball. And glittery pink key chain.

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