

An Explanation of *Promise*,  
A Trifecta Project on Dreaming in America

*The Bad News Book*: Four Essays on the Grammatical Structure of Dreaming in America

Set into four essays, *The Bad News Book* elaborates on dreaming in America. Since we cannot foresee the future, we instead must write about it. The book tells a genealogical tale across familial ghosts, grammar, and literary forebears from my hometown of El Paso on the Southwestern borderland. *The Bad News Book* traces the echoes that emanate from literary, familial, and regional voices by rendering relevant the life of the dead. This book includes reflections on my Grandfather's green card, Johnny Cash's "Man in Black," writers from my heritage, former iterations of the same book, and my familial history of immigration. These predecessors instill the conviction that our country remains forthcoming and wholly nascent.

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'*OUGHT*': A Three-Hundred Year History through Legal and Political Philosophy

This book takes one word, 'ought,' and explains its significance across a 300-year etymological voyage. How have various philosophers employed 'ought,' and why is it important? By entertaining a single word, 'ought,' a reader discovers the power of language to both pledge and promise. Words can predict, demand, hope, manifest, and yearn, and when used as an instrument for social efforts, language conveys a fragile and imperative commitment to progress. However, with all the possibilities provided by language, it is in promises (such as the pursuit of happiness), where we can breach beyond our realities to fortify democratic visions. To defend this stance, '*OUGHT*' connects thinkers within legal, moral, and political philosophies. Ultimately, this book ardently defends the political utility of spoken promises along with their resulting pursuits.

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*The Good Man's Book*: An Epistolary Novel and a Cowboy Opry

A song for horizons rather than a country. As a philosophical fiction, the entire plot takes place across a mind map. To enact the story, the reader places popup props on the map. The chapters exemplify various documents, epistolary letters, books, a Socratic play, and a wordplay dictionary. Deploying fictional accounts of Alan Jackson, George Strait, along with avatars such as Icarus (in his dust state), Lefty Westin, and Dusty Darlin,' *The Good Man's Book (Cowboy Opry)* examines empire. The work describes the Westward traipse of empire through the Outlaw figure. What separates an Outlaw from a Visionary? Who is within the law and why? To answer these questions, *Good Man's Book (Cowboy Opry)* blends story, popup props, legal, literary, and visual scholarship into a dialogical event across fiction, truth, and myth.