



Rock of Ages, Sands of Time: Paintings by Barbara Page, Text by Warren Allmon

Barbara Page, Warren D. Allmon

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Two tiny trilobites in a vast Cambrian ocean drift past sea cucumber parasols and a shaggy, tree-like sponge. Snail tracks loop enigmatically against brushed-gray Silurian slate, and ghostly white crinoids feather a Devonian seascape. A delicate pterosaur flies bravely into the Jurassic gloom, while a *Tyrannosaurus rex* so big that its teeth fill our field of vision stalks the deep orange sands that mark the end of the Cretaceous period.

These are just a few scenes from the magnificent drama that unfolds in glorious full color and three-dimensional texture in *Rock of Ages, Sands of Time*. Each of Barbara Page's 544 contiguous painted panels represents a million years of the history of life on earth, with fossil plants and animals depicted at the same scale and in association with each other just as they might be found by a paleontologist in the field. A muted rainbow of background colors evoke the rocks in which the fossils were found—the Texas Red Beds, for instance, or the yellow Solnhofen limestone—and keystone events are shown metaphorically, with fat rolls of paint marking major extinctions or continental drift.

To fully experience the awesome impact of an eon's worth of time spread across 500 feet of bas-relief panels, you'd have to visit the Museum of the Earth in Ithaca, New York, where Page's specially commissioned work will be installed when the museum opens in 2002. But this book is the next best thing. Not only does it contain crisp color reproductions of each painting, but it also includes an accessible essay from paleontologist Warren Allmon giving the scientific context behind the art.

For fossil lovers of all ages, and anyone interested in the merging of art and science, *Rock of Ages, Sands of Time* will be the find of a lifetime.

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