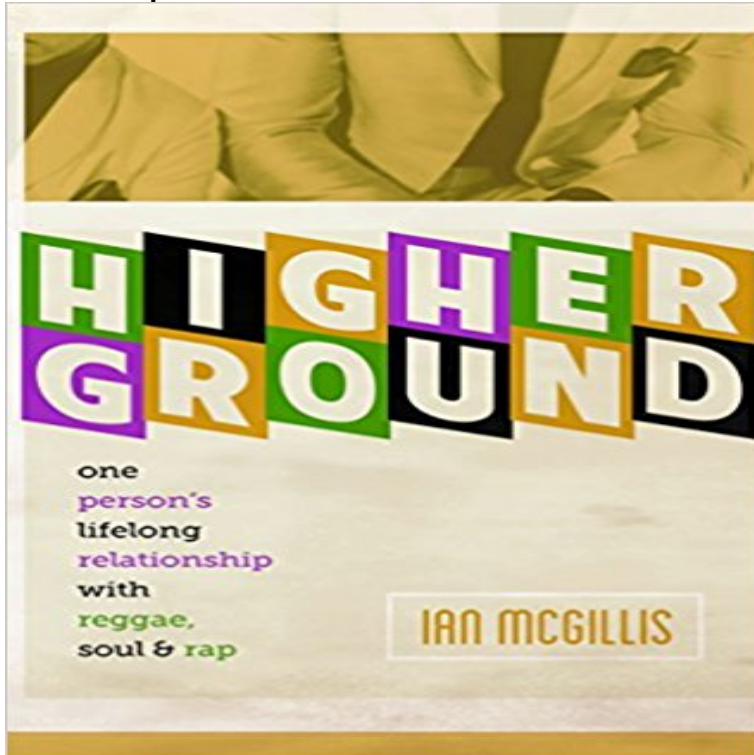


## Higher Ground: One Persons Lifelong Relationship with Soul, Reggae and Rap



Ian McGillis may well have grown up in the whitest place in North America: Edmonton, Alberta, in the 1970s and 80s. Yet, through a series of fortuitous accidents, he became exposed to the world of black music—first soul and Motown, then reggae, then hip-hop—and it became a life-long passion. In three parts built around Stevie Wonder's *Innervisions*, *The Congos Heart of The Congos*, and Nas' *Illmatic*, *Higher Ground* recounts his love affair with each form. McGillis does not shy away from the tough questions: What is the line between sincere appreciation and cultural appropriation? Can a white person truly understand soul, reggae and hip-hop? Can a black form cross over without losing its essence? His answers to each of these questions, and many more, are thoughtful and illuminating, and may well leave the reader rethinking some of his own assumptions. Reminiscent of the best writing of Griel Marcus and John Jeremiah Sullivan and mixing memoir, cultural history, and musical and cultural theory in a fresh and readable way, *Higher Ground* offers up a real life *The Commitments* and a life-study in musical appreciation. Ian McGillis resides in Montreal, is the author of the best-selling novel *A Tourists Guide to Glengarry*, and writes a weekly books column for the *Montreal Gazette*.

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