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COVER: Lower Mississippian crinoids from the Maynes Creek Formation in central Iowa (United States). In this deposit, different crinoid species are preserved in different, distinct colors ranging from white to dark gray. Presumably some intrinsic biotic differences among the living animals remain within these ~350 million-year-old fossils. As described in O'Malley et al. [this issue, "Isolation and characterization of the earliest taxon-specific organic molecules (Mississippian, Crinoidea)," p. 347–350], taxon-specific biomarkers can be isolated from Mississippian crinoids. Specimens from the Solem Collection, Beloit College Department of Geology (Wisconsin, USA).

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