



Uproar: Antiphonies to Psalms

Brooks Haxton

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In this book of homemade psalms, Brooks Haxton brings the poetry of the original psalmists, their awe and their music, into our world of jet planes and space travel, automatic rifles and suburban pleasures. As he writes in his preface, "I take psalms less as doctrine than as outcries, and I cry back in these poems from whatever vantage I can find." The result is lucid, touching verse that connects the exalted language of scripture with everyday experience. In a poem called "Dark," for example, Haxton riffs on the gorgeous line "The night also is thine" (Psalm 74) as he stands on his front stoop on a particularly black night. "Thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures" (Psalm 36) brings forth a poem about the perilous joy of bodysurfing. And his response to Psalm 58, "The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance," becomes a poem about Westmoreland in Vietnam.

These vibrant scraps of ancient text reverberate with intimations of the immediate present, and Haxton's poetry, in response, is fresh, funny, and tender. In the pain of doubt, and even in the burlesque of irreverence, he explores the mystery of our abiding passion for the sacred.

From the Hardcover edition.

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