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Concertina Poems

By Joseph Bathanti

Mercer University Press. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Paperback. 96 pages. Dimensions: 8.9in. x 6.0in. x 0.4in. In 1976, Joseph Bathanti left his home in Pittsburgh for a fourteen-month sojourn as a VISTA Volunteer with the North Carolina Department of Correction. His new volume of poems, CONCERTINA, recounts in lyrical sweep his entry into the surreal, brutal, and often terrifyingly beautiful netherworld of convicts and their keepers. It is a world with one foot still firmly planted in the old chain gang, the other venturing beyond the manacles of history into a realm of second chances, while the country, in the throes of its bicentennial celebration, still swoons from Watergate and its aftermath. What's more, CONCERTINA, is an outsiders meditation on the American South and the power of place to transform not only language, but to instill in the speaker the impulse to tell the story of everything his eye lights upon. Indeed, Bathanti's world is as much about the geography, the very ether, of North Carolina, as it is about prisons. His voice is contemplative, poised on a tightrope of its own making, pitched near detonation. There are poems about the gas chamber, bounty hunters, bloodhounds and violence. But there are...



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