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Spring Poems Along The Rio Grande (New Directions Paperbook)

Jimmy Santiago Baca

Spring Poems
Along the Rio Grande



"Baca's voice, brutal yet tender, is unique in America,
one worth paying attention to."

—*The Nation*



Synopsis

In Spring Poems Along the Rio Grande, Jimmy Santiago Baca continues his daily pilgrimage through the meadows, riverbanks, and bosques of the Rio Grande where winter dies, spring explodes, and inextricable links between the human spirit and the natural world are revealed. In Spring Poems Along the Rio Grande, Jimmy Santiago Baca continues his daily pilgrimage through the meadows, riverbanks, and bosques of the Rio Grande where winter dies, spring explodes, and inextricable links between the human spirit and the natural world are revealed--"the river and I see through each other's skins / behind the eyes into the tunnels of water-bone and rushing marrow." These poems expand upon those in Baca's recent Winter Poems Along the Rio Grande -- his visions of love and loss, poverty and renewal, redemption and war are reflected in the rocks, trees and animals of his beloved New Mexico. In Spring Poems the words of the river "rise around thorny thickets / then descend again into the burbling stubble," and the poet surrenders himself to this place where his own words are woven by "a thumbnail-sized yellow spider/ with poppy seed eyes." Born in New Mexico of Chicano and Apache descent, Jimmy Santiago Baca was raised first by his grandmother, but was later sent with his brother to an orphanage. A runaway at age thirteen, it was after Baca was sentenced to five years in a Federal prison at the age of twenty-one that he began to turn his life around: there he learned to read and write and found his passion for poetry. His memoir *A Place To Stand* won the prestigious International Award. He is Champion of the International Poetry Slam and winner of The Before Columbus American Book Award and the Pushcart Prize.

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Customer Reviews

Love his free verse!! Had not heard of him before. Found this book on and decided to take a chance. I haven't read any of the rest of his stuff but I loved the well drawn characters, his sense of rural imagination and issues, and the need for man to be close to the earth. I did not find this to be a tree hugger's book (pleasant surprise) but rather a sense of being grounded in who and where you are and being happy and fulfilled in that. Best poem was - God blesses what is broken. I will look into more of his work.

The book ends with a sampling of meaningful poems but much of the collection feels like a recitation of natural sites rather than purposeful imagery. Not likely to read this particular poet's work in the future.

Santiago Baca's powerful struggle to reinterpret life and living in terms of nature, started in Winter Poems Along the Rio Grande, continues and is brought to a stunning conclusion in the final poem, "What Is Broken Is What God Blesses." Gradually through the Spring poems, he welcomes more and more people into his conversation with nature, his ancestors, people from his past, current friends and lovers, the other self with whom he has shared his life, strangers whose presence is evident from the footpaths that break from his running trail and head for the river, tiny footprints in the dust, or the chain sawed trunks and branches cleared from the same path. We often have to separate things to clearly understand them before reuniting them. Only a poet could say it so well, could take you along and help you experience every step of the process, could bring you so successfully to the end, banged up and new.

I really enjoyed this book. For poetry it reads like, each poem links to the next. It was definitely something I would recommend and I'm not a perry buff.

as expected

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