



Longleaf

John Saad

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Longleaf is a chapbook of poems deeply rooted in place and the landscape of John Saad's native coastal Alabama. This wide-ranging and wise collection shows the poet's bone-deep connection to home that stems from childhood through early adulthood. With finely wrought images and specialized yet lyrical language that recall the best of Rodney Jones and Philip Levine, Saad brings us into his world of the Deep South, where 'the fumbled light of live oaks' mingles with 'the ferrous / howls / of valley dogs.' In these pages, memories of family are woven with observations of a natural world in constant conversation with civilization and the machines that encroach upon it. Still, Saad's poems prove that his environment can and will endure, no matter how marked with freeways and 'smokestacks belching black.' Windows still give us views of an 'anvil sky' dissolving 'over the purple pulse / of switchgrass,' and we can?like the guitar he once abandoned on a riverbank?lose ourselves in 'the cutbank's slow refrains,' at last redeemed by 'the water's dark applause.'

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