



Falling Water: Poems

John Koethe

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"As a poet who is a teacher of philosophy, John Koethe knows better than most of us the uses and dissatisfactions of both disciplines, if indeed they are disciplines. In this ravishing and haunted book he comes face to face with the time when 'more than half my life is gone,' and must try to find the meaning of 'a childish/dream of love, and then the loss of love,/and all the intricate years between.' As funny and fresh as it is tragic and undeceived, *Falling Water* ranks with Wallace Stevens' *Auroras of Autumn* as one of the profoundest meditations on existence ever formulated by an American Poet."

--John Ashbery

"To describe with unpromising candor the inner life of a man adrift in the waning of the 20th century is one thing, but to do it without a shred of self-pity is another. The poems of his new book, *Falling Water*, are like no one else's. In them, even the most extreme exertions of consciousness are transformed into the luminous measures of beautiful speech."

--Mark Strand

"In this ambitious volume, the magnificent poet who gave us *The Late Wisconsin Spring* moves ever more swiftly and surefootedly into the deepest regions of self-invention: the past -- few poets write more accurately and painfully about that uncanny estranged place that never finds its way out of us; the present, or idea of the present, as mere projection, and yet a projection so poignantly, materially, tenderly touched it gleams with all its claustrophobic distances; and the future...'I wish that time could bring the future back again/And let me see things as they used to seem to me/Before I found myself alone, in an emancipated state--/Alone and free and filled...' With its low-key blank verse, its apparently casual manner of speech, its digressions, asides, recollections -- with all its taking its time -- this is a poetry of magnificent undertow, all proximity of thought, singularity of contemplation, protest, pretext, reflection -- all disenchantment and then, suddenly, blazing re-enchantment, with the newly, lovingly, seen-through real."

--Jorie Graham

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