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Handwriting

By Michael Ondaatje

Vintage Publishing. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Handwriting, Michael Ondaatje, The poems in Handwriting are memories of Sri Lanka: the rituals and traditions, history and geography, the smells and tastes and colours of his first home. Here are sunless forests, cattle-bells, stilt-walkers 'with the movement of prehistoric birds'; a Buddha buried 'so roots/like fingers of a blind monk/spread for two hundred years over his face'; 'saffron and panic seed, lotus flowers, sandalwood; a lover, who lay her fearless heart/light as a barn owl/against him all night'. Handwriting is an elegy for lost childhood, for a culture and language lost to the turmoil of history, but it is also a glimpse of the source of the writer's delicate, erotic, mysterious imagination. By focussing on writing frankly about beautiful things, Ondaatje takes the poems beyond narrative to these simple, deeply sensual images - given to us in a language that is pared, cursive and exquisite.



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