



Rowing Inland

Poems by Jim Daniels

"*Rowing Inland* is on par with Daniels's best work, and I would argue many of the most exceptional poems in this book suggest a push forward into more intimate and personal regions of exploration that will make an indelible impression upon his readers."

— TODD DAVIS, AUTHOR OF *WINTERKILL* AND *IN THE KINGDOM OF THE DITCH*

"With scarcely a wasted word, the speaker's examination of his past is excruciatingly objective and pitiless. I value these poems for their precision and honesty, and I appreciate Daniels's wit, dryness of tone, and penchant for the surreal."

— TERRY BLACKHAWK, 2013 KRESGE LITERARY FELLOW

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Rowing *Inland*, Jim Daniels's fifteenth book of poetry is a time machine that takes the reader back to the Metro Detroit of his youth and then accelerates toward the future. With humor and empathy, the author looks at his own family's challenges and those of the surrounding community where the legacy handed down from generation to generation is one of survival. The economic hits that this community has to endure create both an uncertainty about its future and a determined tenacity.

Divided into four sections, *Rowing Inland* calls out key moments from the author's life. The events that inspire many of these poems took place a long time ago and often it has taken the poet his entire life to write about those experiences and write about them with the necessary emotional distance. For example, some of the poems in the section "Late Invocation for Magic" reference the first girl he ever kissed and her accidental death by fire. In the last section of the book, Daniels approaches the current political and social standings in Detroit with lines like, "The distance to Baghdad or Kandahar / is measured in rowboat coffins / while here in the fatty palm of The Mitten / minor skirmishes electrify tedium." Although it focuses on Detroit's metropolitan area, the book can be considered a snapshot of working-class life anywhere across the country. Daniels casts his lens on a way of life that is often distorted or ignored by the powers that be. He zooms in on street level where all the houses may look alike but each holds its own secrets and dreams.

To paraphrase novelist and screenwriter Richard Price, Detroit is the "zip code for [Daniels's] heart"—a place that his writing will always come back to. Readers of contemporary poetry with a regional persuasion will enjoy this collection.



Jim Daniels's recent books include *Apology to the Moon*, *Birth Marks*, and *Eight Mile High* (stories). He is also the writer/producer of a number of short films, including *The End of Blessings*. Born in Detroit, Daniels is the Thomas Stockham Baker University Professor at Carnegie Mellon University.

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