Finished from the Start and Other Plays

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This collection of plays comes from one of Chile's finest voices of the voiceless: Juan Radrigan. A history marked by personal and political hardship has equipped Radrigan to tell the stories of those his nation left behind. Seven years old when his father abandoned his family, he was forced to work from an early age. As an adult, he worked as a manual laborer during a very dark time for Chile: the demise of Salvador Allende and the rise of General Augusto Pinochet. In a time of torture, exile, and political "disappearances," his plays stood as quietly powerful anti-regime statements that mourned the country's loss. Translator Ana Elena Puga's introduction places Radrigan's work in its historical and cultural context and provides ample background for the six pieces. The first work, "Testimonies to the Deaths of Sabina," features a fruit seller who may lose her livelihood after she is accused of some mysterious infraction; but she doesn't know what she has done--if she has truly done anything. "The Beasts" tells the story of three sisters living in the wilderness who, fearing they have been completely abandoned, devise a means of ultimate escape. "Funeral Drums for Lambs and Wolves" comes in three parts: "Isabel Banished in Isabel," a monologue of a woman left to go mad alone; "Without Apparent Motive," a monologue by a murderer who laments the spread of violence; and the dialogue "The Guest," a confrontational piece that speaks directly to the spectators, implicating them in their silent, passive tolerance of Pinochet. The title play, Radrigan's 1981 masterpiece, speaks directly to the specter of the many "disappeared" victims of the military regime.

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