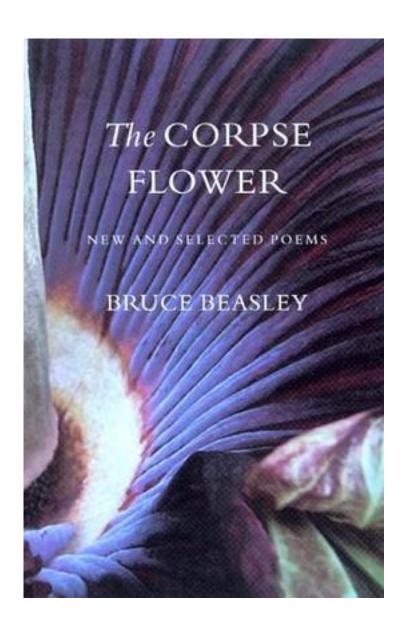
The Corpse Flower



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著者:Beasley, Bruce

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"The Corpse Flower" brings works from Bruce Beasley's first four award-winning collections together with twenty-five new poems, organizing them around the metaphor that gives the book its title: an enormous tropical bloom that reeks like carrion, and around whose three-day florescence 'dung beetles & flies & sweat bees swarm/pollen gummed all over/their furred feet'. The corpse flower serves as a figure for Beasley's coming to terms with birth and death, fecundity and decay, the illusion of death, and the flourishing of the rare and beautiful out of the materials of the decayed. "The Corpse Flower" traces a spiritual pilgrimage, weaving autobiography into a larger meditation on the materials of language and of the life of the spirit. Beasley's is a deeply physical spirituality - as he writes in one poem, 'the soul's/impossible to tell/from the objects of its appetite'. Throughout these poems, family mythology, as well as religious and mythic narrative and iconography, become occasions for extraordinary meditations on the physicality of birth and death, beginnings and endings. This substantial selection of Bruce Beasley's work, written over a twenty year period, offers the opportunity to experience, page by page, a poet's evolution, and to follow a unique, creative mind as it reaches, through interrogations of faith, science, and art, toward some form of resolution - a resolution increasingly represented by the beauties of language itself.

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