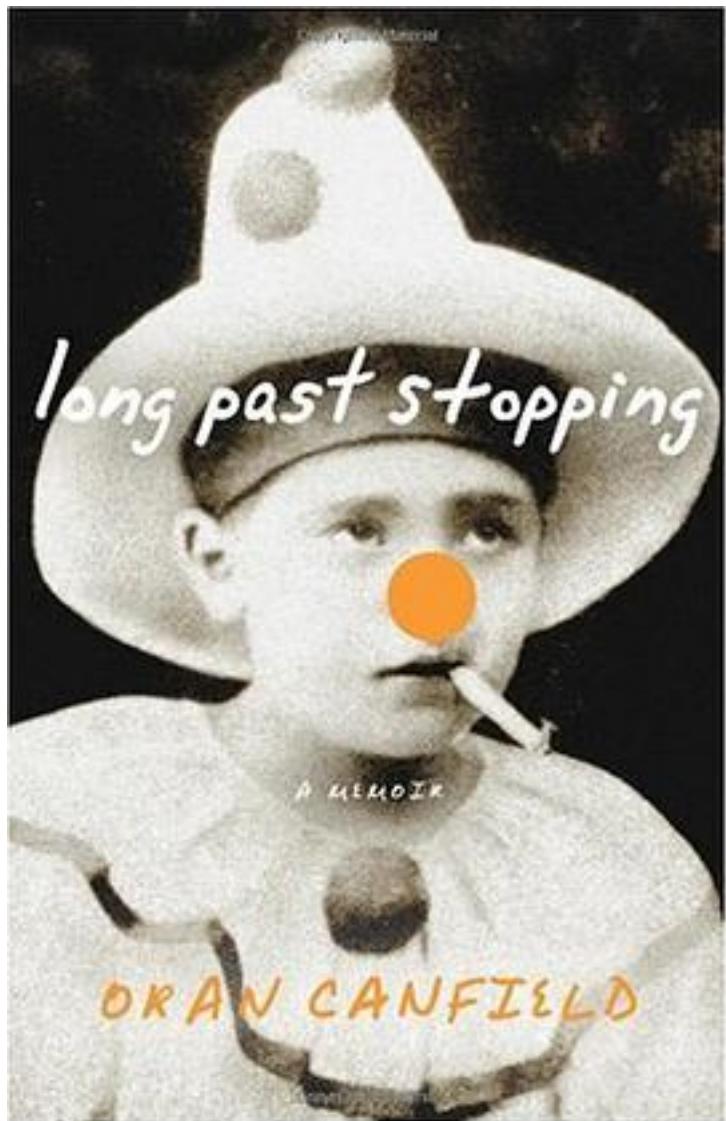


Long Past Stopping



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著者:Oran Canfield

出版者:William Morrow

出版时间:2009-09-01

装帧:Hardcover

isbn:9780061450754

It looked like any other medical chart, with different boxes filled in with my blood pressure and heart rate, but at the bottom, next to Diagnosis, the doctor simply wrote, Terminal Assholism. Juggled between an endless succession of friends, relatives, anarchist boarding schools, libertarian commune dwellers, socialist rebels, and born-again circus clowns, Oran Canfield grew up viewing the inconsistencies of the world with a wary eye. The son of Jack Canfield—the motivational speaker and creator of Chicken Soup for the Soul—Oran is intensely self-conscious and reserved, but his life won't seem to leave him alone. Whether he's teaching two hundred eager self-help disciples to juggle (among them a woman with stumps for hands), dodging a series of wacky near-death experiences, delivering newspapers in satin pants on a unicycle, or experimenting with drugs in the back of a Mexican cop car at age thirteen, one thing's for sure: Oran's life is much stranger than fiction. Eventually he finds some fleeting comfort in heroin, but the world proves dizzying whether he's stoned or sober. Playing drums in fringe bands and bouncing between rehab centers, he encounters a host of weird characters along the way: a devotee of obscure noise music who makes his own sunglasses out of cardboard, hooligan hockey players left in charge of group therapy, and the unassuming chess nerd who might be in the mob. Feeding a dope addiction that becomes more harrowing by the day, Oran sells off every possession and burns every bridge on the road to recovery. With humor and wit, *Long Past Stopping* grapples with the paradoxes of a mad world and shows that feel-good nostrums go only so far. Sometimes the only way out is the hard one.

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