



Light at the Seam

Poems

JOSEPH BATHANTI

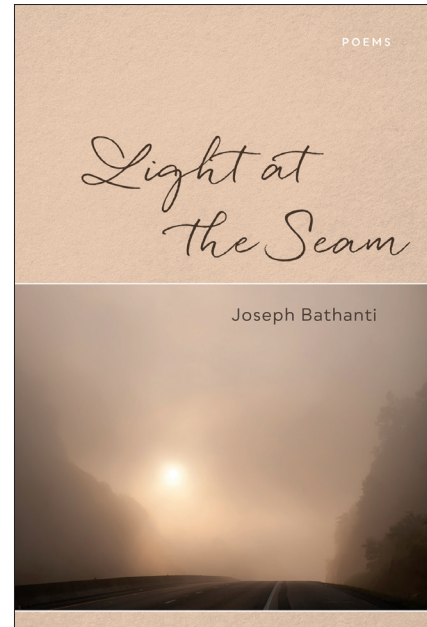
"In *Light at the Seam*, Joseph Bathanti offers us a poetry of immersion reminiscent of Gerard Manley Hopkins—a voice given weight, texture, and energy through a vigorous rhetoric full of physical grit, spondaic music, and lyric diction, often exotic in ways mindful of etymology and infused with a sense of wonder via bold figuration. I know of no other poet with a voice quite like this. It is singular."—Bruce Bond

"Joseph Bathanti's eco-poems simultaneously praise the intricate beauty of creation and rage against the coal industry's destruction of Appalachian mountains and Appalachian lives."—George Ella Lyon

"*Light at the Seam* is exactly that—the lit language of poetry working its way back into Earth's deepest beginnings, restoring to our threatened world its dignity as Creation. Joseph Bathanti stands in the lineage of Hopkins, in and on the mountains of West Virginia, and witnesses both their beauty and ruin. These poems praise—the earth, the human, the divine—and offer a way to 'look upon the earth' that could be our saving grace."—Diane Gilliam Fisher

Light at the Seam, a new collection from North Carolina poet Joseph Bathanti, is an exploration of mountaintop removal in southern Appalachian coal country. The volume illuminates and champions often invisible people residing, in a precarious moment in time, on the glorious, yet besieged, Appalachian earth. Their call to defend it, as well as their faith that the land will exact its own reckoning, constitutes a sacred as well as existential quest. Rooted in social and restorative justice, *Light at the Seam* contemplates the earth as fundamentally sacramental, a crucible of awe and mystery, able to regenerate itself and its people even as it succumbs to them. More than mere cautionary tale, this is a volume of hope and wonder.

JOSEPH BATHANTI, former poet laureate of North Carolina (2012–14) and recipient of the North Carolina Award in Literature, is the author of seventeen books. He is the McFarlane Family Distinguished Professor of Interdisciplinary Education at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina.



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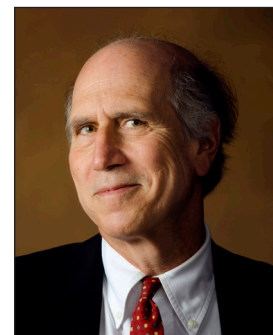
LSU Press Paperback Original

Poetry

Light at the Seam

This is the afterlife,
threshold of oblivion:
a blacktop crest
on Pine Mountain,
Bell County, Kentucky,
US Route 119 burning
north through the heart
of coal until it plays out,
frozen, in DuBois, PA.

Out of gauzy lavender fog,
the wakened sun
swoons in white robes:
Jesus, flanked by Moses
and Elijah, transfigured,
*up into a high mountain
apart*. Deep within,
miners suspire,
shake light at the seam.



Matthew Wachner