



Cove

Poems

JAMES BRASFIELD

PRAISE FOR *COVE*

“I love a book that begins with a ‘cortege of clouds’ and ends with ‘lapis’: it’s rich with ceremonial movement and painterly light.”—Bruce Smith

“To the mystery of ‘what was once never here,’ James Brasfield brings subtle lyricism and heartbreaking narrative. In still moments—when detail animates landscape and weather, bird and flower—the poet welds geography and history into a dynamic present. Close observation powers ‘Cove,’ the magnificent title poem. This ‘song for our species’ is a sublime achievement.”—Robin Becker

In *Cove*, the compulsive intensity with which James Brasfield seeks to capture a fleeting moment’s imagery, “to choose a song sown / for the moment,” imbues his poems with a sense of urgency and movement. By exploring the translation of the sensory world into art, Brasfield faces the passage of time and the transitory nature of experience, thought, and memory. The poems find “angles of vision” to rescue a present instant in its essential fluidity, to go deep enough, without distraction, into the moment and reveal touchstones of being. Throughout *Cove*, Brasfield embraces the enduring effort to create an experience of language that is rich, lasting, and true, as life speeds into and through the future.

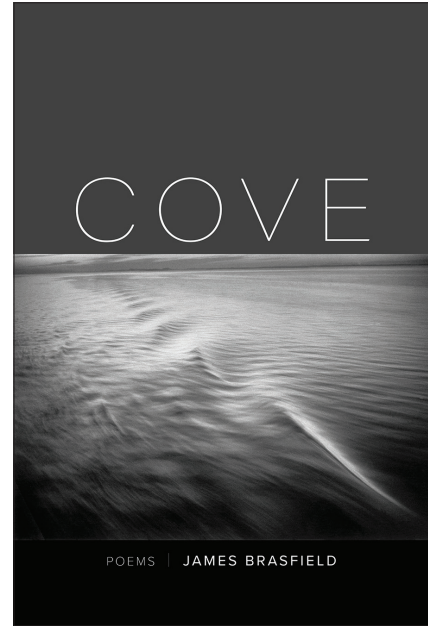
JAMES BRASFIELD is the author of two previous books of poems, *Ledger of Crossroads* and *Infinite Altars*, and cotranslator of *The Selected Poems of Oleh Lysheha*, which won the 2000 PEN Award for Poetry in Translation. He has twice been a Senior Fulbright Fellow to Ukraine and has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

like pigment on a cave wall,
brushstroke in the firelight,
no matter the bleakness of days:
a family dressed in bison skin
is dancing motion’s moment

in stillness—its equilibrium,
a symmetry with a small flock
of ocher birds ascending upon the wall
and one bird perched on a branch above
the packed earth of the cave—

their world born from water and earth
to sounds from a little flute made
from marrowbone—what was that song?

—from “Cove”



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Poetry

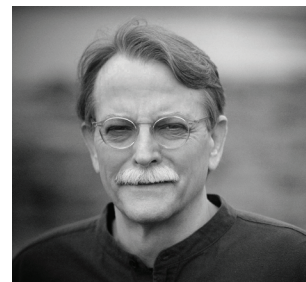


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