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Cries for Help, Various: Stories

Padgett Powell



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Cries for Help, Various: Stories Padgett Powell **Named a Best Book of 2015 by NPR and Vanity Fair**

"Rifles through fear, identity, meaning, and cultural memory in forty-four short, surreal stories." —*Vanity Fair*

"By turns moving, funny, and maddening.... very much in the key of Donald Barthelme." —*The New York Times Book Review*

"Somehow both grounded and absurd, each one of the stories trying get at that heart of the confusion and sadness at the core of contemporary life." -VICE

From the highly acclaimed author of *Edisto* and *The Interrogative Mood*, Padgett Powell's new collection of stories, *Cries for Help, Various*, follows his mentor Donald Barthelme's advice that "wacky mode" must "break their hearts." The surrealistic and comical terrain of most of the forty-four stories here is grounded by a real preoccupation with longing, fear, work, loneliness, and cultural nostalgia. These universal concerns are given exhilarating life by way of Powell's "wit, his . . . dazzling turns of phrase" (Scott Spencer).

Padgett Powell's language is both lofty and low-down, his tone cranky and heartfelt, exuberant and inconsolable. His characters rebel against convention and ambition, hoping to maintain their very sanity by doing so. Even the most hilarious or fantastical stories in *Cries for Help, Various* ring gloriously, poignantly, true.

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