



A Scrap in the Blessings Jar

New and Selected Poems

DAVID BOTTOMS

Edited, with an Introduction, by **ERNEST SUAREZ**

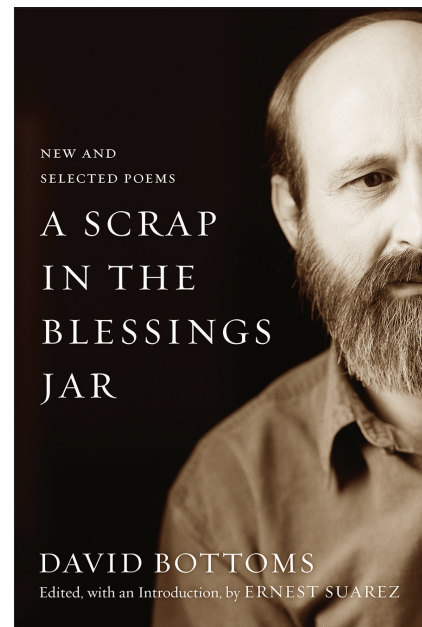
PRAISE FOR DAVID BOTTOMS

“David Bottoms is brilliant in the clarity and richness of his language, profoundly humane in the breadth and compassion of his vision. He is quite simply one of the best poets writing today.”—Jane Hirshfield

A Scrap in the Blessings Jar, a volume of new and selected poems by David Bottoms, captures the evolution of the poet’s spiritual quest over the past fifty years. A native and longtime resident of Georgia, Bottoms draws inspiration from the American South, and his work examines themes related to family dynamics, the woods, animals, fishing, and music in an effort to, as he once told an interviewer, “reveal something about the hidden things of the world, the vague or shadowy relationships and connections that exist just below the surface of our daily lives.” This book charts his progression from tightly wrought naturalistic narratives to works that reflect his shifting conception of the interplay between memory, the present, and the metaphysical. At heart, Bottoms remains a storyteller who employs figurative language to discover the extraordinary in the seemingly mundane, and whose poetry explores the depths of our existential condition and common humanity.

DAVID BOTTOMS’s first book, *Shooting Rats at the Bibb County Dump*, was chosen by Robert Penn Warren as winner of the 1979 Walt Whitman Award from the Academy of American Poets. Before his death in 2023, Bottoms published nine other collections of poetry, two novels, and a book of essays and interviews. His other honors included the Frederick Bock Prize and the Levinson Prize, both from *Poetry* magazine, and an award in literature from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. He served for twelve years as poet laureate of Georgia.

ERNEST SUAREZ is the David M. O’Connell Professor of English at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, and executive director of the Association of Literary Scholars, Critics, and Writers.



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Poetry

Southern Messenger Poets; Dave Smith, Series Editor

Maybe, like me, you’ve paused in the dogwoods
at the edge of a churchyard
to hear those many tongues twisting into one tongue
around that old hymn
and felt yourself listening suddenly
with your heart.

That wasn’t grace, but grace had been there,
the way the stirring of leaves
is not the wind, or the paw print beside the creek
not the fox.

—from “Grace”