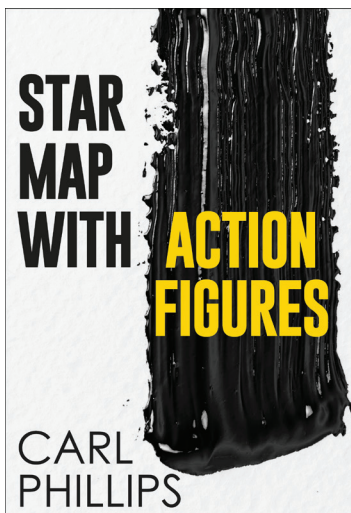


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a chapbook of poetry

CARL PHILLIPS STAR MAP WITH ACTION FIGURES



Author: Carl Phillips

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CARL PHILLIPS is the author of fourteen books of poetry, most recently *Wild Is the Wind* (FSG, 2018) and *Reconnaissance* (FSG, 2015), winner of the PEN USA Award and the Lambda Literary Award. He is also the author of two books of prose: *The Art of Daring: Risk, Restlessness, Imagination* (Graywolf, 2014) and *Coin of the Realm: Essays on the Life and Art of Poetry* (Graywolf, 2004), and he is the translator of Sophocles' *Philoctetes* (Oxford, 2004). His honors include the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize for Poetry, the Kingsley Tufts Award, the Aiken Taylor Award for Modern American Poetry, *The Kenyon Review* Award for Literary Achievement, and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Library of Congress, and the Academy of American Poets. He teaches at Washington University in St. Louis.



SUMMARY

"How does a sentence, // just like that, become prayer?" Part parable, part bestiary, part glossary of possible and impossible loves, *Star Map with Action Figures*, poem after poem, provides an answer. From the space between punishment and its promise, Phillips quizzes the thousand churlish faces of desire: two boys making love on a riverbank, a horse named Nightmare, the self "a needle pushed through / the stretched canvas of belief." *Star Map with Action Figures* counters the body's certainty with febrile syntax, challenging the mirror's ability to capture and the lover's willingness to stay. From the "forest that stands at the exact center of sorrow" to the cathedral in the speaker's mind, *Star Map with Action Figures* charts the severe and glittering histories of intimacy in flux. A king, a willow, a captain, the sea—all themselves, more, less, unsayable and not—become kinds of heroes, shattering the myth of "a limit to what any story could hold onto."

CARL PHILLIPS
**STAR MAP WITH
ACTION FIGURES**



“Carl Phillips has forged an entire poetry career in describing the nuance of emotional states, finding and naming that wilderness of layered feelings that inscribe the truest experiences...”

- LOS ANGELES REVIEW OF BOOKS -

“I have a candidate for the author of the most interesting contemporary English sentences and it is not primarily a prose writer: the American poet Carl Phillips... Phillip’s [sic] style has been remarkably consistent from volume to volume, upsetting our easy assumption that great artists evolve from phase to phase...”

- THE NEW YORKER -

“Carl Phillips creates smooth currents of language that begin in one place, subtly shift direction and then shift again.... The sounds and rhythms of these poems are gorgeous, and Phillips, whose awards include the Los Angeles Times Book Prize, isn’t afraid to ask unsettling questions...”

- THE WASHINGTON POST -

“Since the publication of his first book, *In the Blood* (1992), Carl Phillips has generated a body of poetry that is singular for its demanding intimacy, its descriptions of the dissonant energies within a self, and its beauty...”

- THE PARIS REVIEW -

“[Phillips] is a prolific writer, which would be tolerable if the books weren’t individually and collectively brilliant. As a poet and essayist, it’s no exaggeration to say he’s one of the very most influential, critically admired, and important poets of his generation. No one but [Phillips] sounds like [Phillips]. Imitators wash up on the shore of his distinctive extended syntax, his uncanny concretizing of abstract states-of-being, as well as the usefully obsessive, sacred/erotic conundrum that underpins both the poems and the essays...”

- THE BEST AMERICAN POETRY BLOG -