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Compulsory Happiness

By Manea, Norman. Coverdale, Linda, Translator.

Yale. 1 Paperback(s), 1993. soft. Book Condition: New. In cool, precise prose, and with an unerring sense of the absurd, the four novellas in this omnibus originally published in Romanian in the 1980s create a picture of everyday life in a grotesque police state, expressing terror and hope, fear and solidarity, the humorous triviality of the ordinary, and the painful search for an ideal. Deported to a concentration camp in 1941, where he remained until the end of World War II, Jewish novelist and cultural critic Norman Manea returned to his Romanian homeland, but was forced out once more in 1986 by Ceausescu's brutal communist regime. Now living and writing in New York, he is the recipient of such honors as the MacArthur Fellowship, Italy's Nonino International Literary Prize, and France's Prix Médicis Étranger. "Norman Manea's four novellas, written during the later Ceausescu years, offer a comparable contrast to other Eastern European dissident writing. Instead of the energetic irony we find a dreamy disconnection, a voice that shock has lowered, an air of sweetness driven mad." LATimes "Mr. Manea's voice is radically new, and we are blessedly awakened and alerted by the demand his fiction makes on our understanding." NYTBR 259.


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