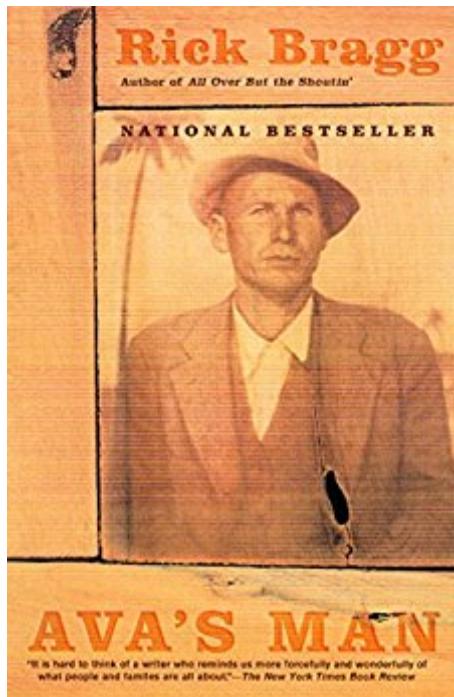


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Ava's Man



Synopsis

With the same emotional generosity and effortlessly compelling storytelling that made *All Over But the Shoutin'* a national bestseller, Rick Bragg continues his personal history of the Deep South. This time he's writing about his grandfather Charlie Bundrum, a man who died before Bragg was born but left an indelible imprint on the people who loved him. Drawing on their memories, Bragg reconstructs the life of an unlettered roofer who kept food on his family's table through the worst of the Great Depression; a moonshiner who drank exactly one pint for every gallon he sold; an unregenerate brawler, who could sit for hours with a baby in the crook of his arm. In telling Charlie's story, Bragg conjures up the backwoods hamlets of Georgia and Alabama in the years when the roads were still dirt and real men never cussed in front of ladies. A masterly family chronicle and a human portrait so vivid you can smell the cornbread and whiskey, *Ava's Man* is unforgettable. From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

As impossible as it may seem, Rick Bragg's soaring, compelling and inspiring "Ava's Man," his

account of the life and time of his maternal grandfather, eclipses "All Over but the Shoutin." I find it difficult to describe the impact this astounding memoir had on me; I can honestly tell you that I have never wept or laughed (often simultaneously) over the pages of a book as I did while reading "Ava's Man." This work contains more raw material on what life should mean to us and how to live that life than most undergraduate educations. Through handsomely crafted anecdotes, Bragg has constructed a unique homage -- to a person, place and time which have passed from the American scene. As we learn who Charlie Bundrum was, what motivated him and how deeply he influenced those who loved and respected him, we discover a genuine American archetype by which we can measure our own lives. A memoir Americans will treasure for decades to come, its author has now elevated himself to the highest level of our national letters. The introduction and epilogue alone richly outline the Charlie Bundrum's essential qualities. A powerful roofer and talented distiller, an angry, violent man who desperately loved and protected his family, a fiercely resilient man who disdained societal restrictions, Charlie Bundrum would be painfully out of place in the modern South. "It is only when you compare him with today...that he seems larger than life. The difference between then and now is his complete lack of shame. He was not ashamed of his clothes, his speech, his life. He not only thrived, he gloried in it." Rick Bragg describes his grandfather as a man "whose wings never quite fit him.

And if reading does indeed improve there is a high probability that Rick Bragg will write it. His first book, "All Over But The Shoutin", was a remarkable book and was recognized as such. And when a group of his stories were collected for, "Somebody Told Me", it contained shorter works that can stand with any that have appeared, whether fiction or non-fiction. I don't understand why this new work, "Ava's Man" is touted as a continuation of his first book. It is true the work expands on the history of his Family, but it is more of a prequel, exploring his Grandfather, Rick's Mother, and her Sisters. The distinction is important, for if you are expecting part two of Shoutin, which is not what you will get. I want to be clear; I am not criticizing this book. There is no one else writing today that I enjoy reading more. This new work is different, and the reasons are clear, the Author almost states as much in his comments. In his previous work he has written either about his own experiences from a child to the writer he is today, or he was writing his first hand accounts of events as he experienced them. In, "Ava's Man", he is relating a story of a man he never knew as told, by among others, his Mother and his Aunts. The result of his collecting and relating the stories of others requires he be faithful to what they share. This same requirement left him little space to write prose that is totally unique and his own. There were bits of the book where he would introduce an idea, or

summarize a lifestyle or a manner of speaking, and the writing was pure Rick Bragg Poetry. But this was not the rule.

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