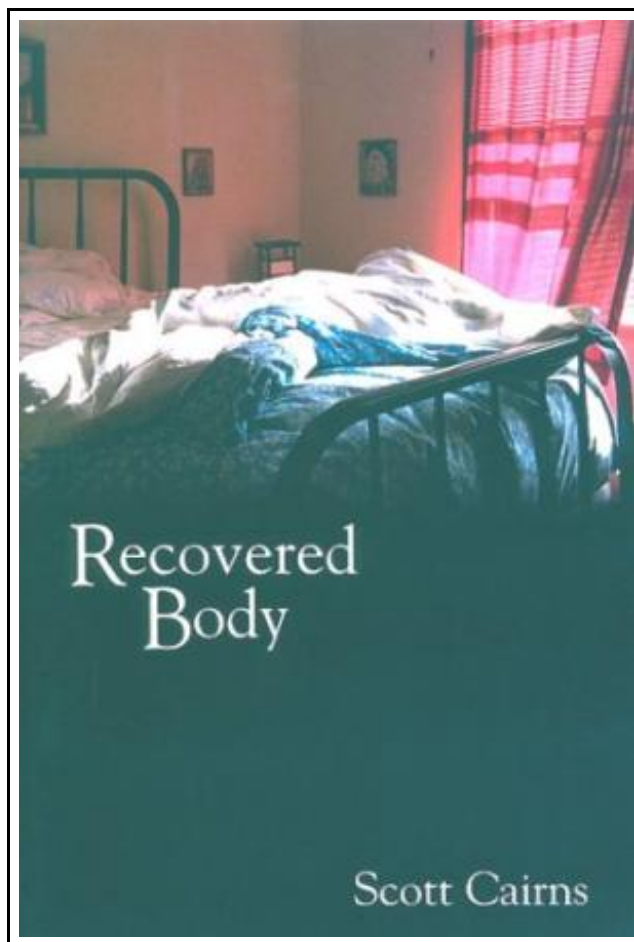


## Recovered Body



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Eighth Day Press December 2003, 2003. Paper Back. Book Condition: New. No dimension of real human existence is ignored in these poems: faith, doubt, sexuality, mortality. For Cairns to separate the spirit from the Body would be to ignore "the very issue which / induced the Christ to take on flesh." Thus, in *Recovered Body*, we meet Christ where he inhabits the physical, where the "mystery of spirit [is] graven / in what is commonplace and plain -- / the broken brittle crust, the cup." In this way, Cairns' poems are sacramental -- dramatic events that lead us to the cusp of faith's mysteries, where, for example, the import of "The Turning of Lot's Wife," can be seen anew: "In the impossible interval where she stood, Marah saw that she could not turn her back on even one doomed child of the city, but must turn her back instead upon the saved." Or where the story of Adam and Eve reveals that "The Entrance of Sin" comes not simply from an appetite for the forbidden, but also from a withdrawal from the body of creation, which God had deemed very good: "The beginning of loss was this: every time some manner of beauty was offered and declined, the subsequent isolation each conceived was irresistible." For all their theological weight, however, Cairns' poems never feel heavy. Like W.H. Auden, Cairns possesses a keen wit and a good ear. His graceful language enables him to speak naturally from within the Incarnational paradox, toward moments when word almost becomes act, when the presence of Christian mystery is palpable: "All loves are bodily, require / that the lips part, and press their trace / of secrecy upon the one / beloved."

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