



Peace Like a River

By LEIF ENGER

Grove Press September 2002, 2002. Paper Back. Book Condition: New. From the first page of Leif Enger's first novel, set in the Dakotas mid-twentieth-century, the miraculous and the gritty coalesce in a fashion seldom seen in our day. We are a bit shocked, embarrassed by it. Unless they are joined by a writer who composes paragraphs the final sentences of which could be strung together in a catena resembling Marcus Aurelius's Meditations. For instance: "It's one thing to be sick of your own infirmities and another to understand that the people you love most are sick of them also. You are very near to being friendless in the world." Or this: "The foundation had been laid in prayer and sorrow. Since that fearful night, Dad had responded with the almost impossible work of belief. He had burned with repentance as though his own hand had fired the gun. He had laid up prayer as if with a trowel. You know this is true, and if you don't it is I the witness who am to blame." The protagonist, eleven year-old asthmatic Reuben Land says this of the word miracle: "For too long it's been used to characterize things or events...



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