

Winner of the South Carolina Poetry Book Prize

SIGNALS

Ed Madden

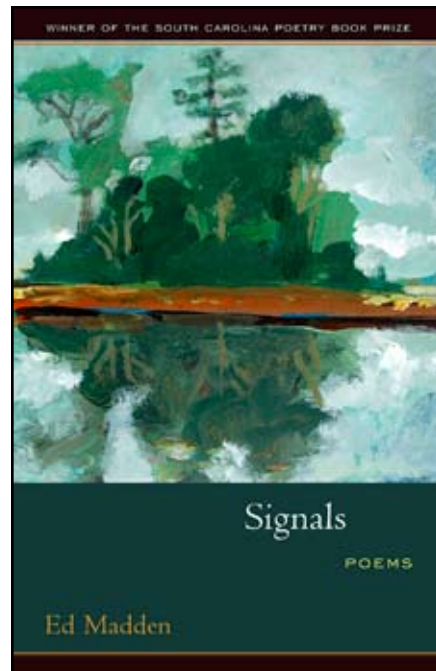
Foreword by Afaa Weaver

"*Signals* combines a matter of fact lyrical eye with a view to harder social realities, and there is a consistency in the collection, a working with and around couplets and tercets, a sparseness that seems to match an arid landscape, a place where one searches for hope. This collection bears the evidence of a high level of craft alongside a concern for what goes on in our lives."—Afaa Weaver, from the foreword

Selected by Afaa Weaver as the third annual winner of the South Carolina Poetry Book Prize, *Signals* is the first book-length collection from Ed Madden. Deeply rooted in the recognizable landscapes and legacies of the American South, these lyric poems couple daring engagements in topics of race and sexuality with tender reflections on personal and cultural histories. Madden's adopted home of South Carolina rises to the surface in poems set at Folly Beach, Fort Moultrie, Lake Keowee, and Middleton Place. His interrogations of social oppression conjure the ubiquitous iconography of the bygone Confederacy, a first encounter with the miniseries *Roots*, and a cameo appearance by Strom Thurmond. In the collection's central section, Madden turns to issues of sexual difference, community formation, and the place of gay men in contemporary southern culture. Throughout Madden repeatedly turns to the artifacts that demarcate his memories of youth in the rural South to ask how we define home, how we form meaning out of the silences and losses of the past, and what rituals and relationships might sustain us as we inch forward across a rough terrain of shifting emotional and moral challenges.

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Ed Madden is an associate professor of English and associate director of Women's and Gender Studies at the University of South Carolina as well as writer in residence at the Riverbanks Botanical Gardens in Columbia, South Carolina. He earned his B.A. in English from Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas, a B.S. in biblical studies from the Institute for Christian Studies in Austin, Texas, and his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in English from the University of Texas at Austin.

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