



Down in Orburndale: A Songwriter's Youth in Old Florida

Bobby Braddock

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Bobby Braddock, one of the most successful country songwriters of all time, is a living legend. His smash hit "He Stopped Loving Her Today" won the Country Music Association's Song of the Year Award in two consecutive years and was voted "Song of the Century" in a poll conducted by Radio & Records magazine and "greatest country song of all time" in a poll conducted by the BBC. In this captivating narrative, Braddock demonstrates that he is as much at home writing the story of his life as crafting an award-winning country tune. Warm, candid, intimate, and laugh-out-loud funny, *Down in Orburndale* -- the title plays on the Southern pronunciation of Braddock's hometown of Auburndale, Florida -- recounts his colorful saga up to age twenty-four, when he decides to move to Nashville and pursue a career as a professional songwriter.

Braddock retains enormous affection for his Florida upbringing, back in the mid-twentieth century when "Florida was still Southern," oranges were more essential than tourists to the state's economy, and every small town seemed to be populated with actual eccentric characters right out of a Southern novel -- like Bobby's father, twenty-four years older than his mother, with a voice that was "a cross between Foghorn Leghorn and W. C. Fields." Braddock's sensory memory of his childhood infuses his storytelling with the sights, sounds, smells, and significance of everyday living. When he tells tales of playing rock 'n' roll music in the Deep South of the early 1960s, readers experience some of the decade's most significant moments from a different perspective (for example, his band was in Birmingham, Alabama, when the Ku Klux Klan murdered four little girls). Along the way, he battles depression, hypochondria, and panic disorder, marries, and finally finds his true calling.

Rednecks, religion, Florida, oranges, swamps, politics, racism, love, sex, illness, family, murder, and dreams -- all fill the pages of Braddock's compulsively readable ode to his youth. But it is music, above all else, that drives the story, providing a soundtrack for a life lived large.



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