



In Other Words

John Crowley

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John Crowley's masterful novels (*Aegypt, Little, Big, The Translator*) are marked by an uncommon combination of imaginative power and intellectual rigor. That same intellectual rigor is on full display in this, Crowley's first, long-overdue collection of non-fiction. *In Other Words* brings together more than forty pieces on a wide variety of subjects, and offers a fascinating glimpse into the inner workings of a subtle, insatiably curious mind. *In Other Words* contains, among other delights, long, thoughtful musings on the late Renaissance scholar Ioan Culianu ("A Modern Instance: Magic, Imagination, and Power"), on Utopian fiction ("The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart"), and on the nature of narrative itself ("Tips and Tricks for Successful Lying"). In other pieces, Crowley takes an in-depth look at five writers whose work he finds especially significant (T.H. White, Anthony Burgess, Robert Louis Stevenson, Thomas Disch, and Vladimir Nabokov), and offers shorter, equally incisive takes on writers such as John Updike, Italo Calvino, Thomas Berger, Kathryn Davis, and John Banville. In the closing section (entitled, simply, "Comix"), Crowley reveals a (perhaps) surprising affinity for the world of comic strips. His reflections on Walt Kelley, George Herriman, Ben Katchor, and Edward Gorey are informed and affectionate, and contain some of Crowley's most memorable critical writing. *In Other Words* is one of those all-too-rare volumes that readers will return to again and again, finding new and valuable perceptions on each encounter. Incisive, sympathetic, and unfailingly erudite, it enhances our understanding of a major American writer, and serves as a welcome -- and necessary -- addition to a remarkable body of work.

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