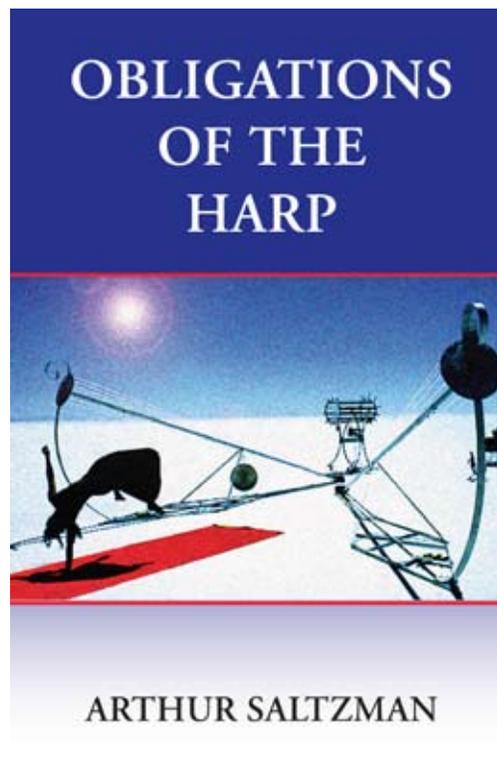


OBLIGATIONS OF THE HARP

ARTHUR SALTZMAN

978-1-60235-115-8 (paperback, \$24.00; £16.00; €19.00; \$29.00 CAD); 978-1-60235-116-5 (Adobe eBook \$16.00; £11.00; €13.00; \$20.00 CAD); 213 pages.

There is never a dull phrase in Arthur Saltzman's *Obligations of the Harp*, his fourth book of essays. The writing in these twenty-five pieces is by turns wry and satirical, sensually descriptive, playfully punning—but always nuanced and illuminating. Reference points range from Kobe Bryant to John Updike, from geology to Jewish ritual. One essay is a fanciful treatment of the history of the human cannonball; another provides a deeply humane and humorous account of preparing middle-schoolers for History Day. Varied in topic and tone, Saltzman consistently revels in and re-imagines the mysterious quirks of human behavior. The award-winning essay, "Reason Not the Need," for example, links the seemingly random care behind what we choose to save from a fire to Saltzman's personal soft-spot for cafeteria jelly packets, "with the heft and suppleness of a small toad resting squat in your palm," to the plundering of the Iraqi National Museum of Antiquities. "Hard-wired for wonder and for worry," Saltzman is a truly original mind alive to the artful accidents and patterns of the social, natural, and human worlds.



In addition to *The Obligations of the Harp*, Arthur Saltzman's previous books include the collections of essays *Solve for X* (2007, University of South Carolina Press), *Nearer* (2006, Parlor Press) and *Objects and Empathy* (2001, winner of the First Series Creative Nonfiction Award), and six critical studies of literature and writers. Recognitions for his writing include the 2005 Columbia Nonfiction Award, the 2003 Victor J. Emmett Memorial Essay Award (from *Midwest Quarterly*), the 2002 Nebraska Review Creative Nonfiction Award, and the inaugural Ames Memorial Essay Award (from *Literal Latte*). He was a Professor of English at Missouri Southern State University at the time of his death in 2008.

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