



## Times Beach (NOTRE DAME REVIEW Prize)

By John Shoptaw

University of Notre Dame Press. Paperback. Condition: New. 144 pages. Times Beach is a personal, cultural, and environmental history of the Mississippi watershed, a poetic meditation on how the river is ceaselessly shaped by, and shaping, the lives around it. John Shoptaw guides us from the Mississippi headwaters in Lake Itasca to its delta in the Gulf of Mexico, from its aboriginal mounds to its present-day dams and levees, weaving together episodes in the life of the river the New Madrid earthquakes of 1811 and 1812, the great floods of 1927 and 2010, the EPA's eradication of the dioxin-laced town of Times Beach with his own memories of growing up in the part of southeast Missouri known as the Bootheel. A pivotal place in Times Beach is Shoptaw's home county of New Madrid, a hardwood floodplain of the Lower Mississippi that, over time, has been drained, logged, and farmed. Still muggy and earthquake prone, Swampast Misery is the poet's autobiographical landscape where he picked cotton, was baptized in a drainage ditch, and worked in the lumber mill. It is also the place his education let him escape, delivering him to a life far away from the swampland to which these poems return....

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