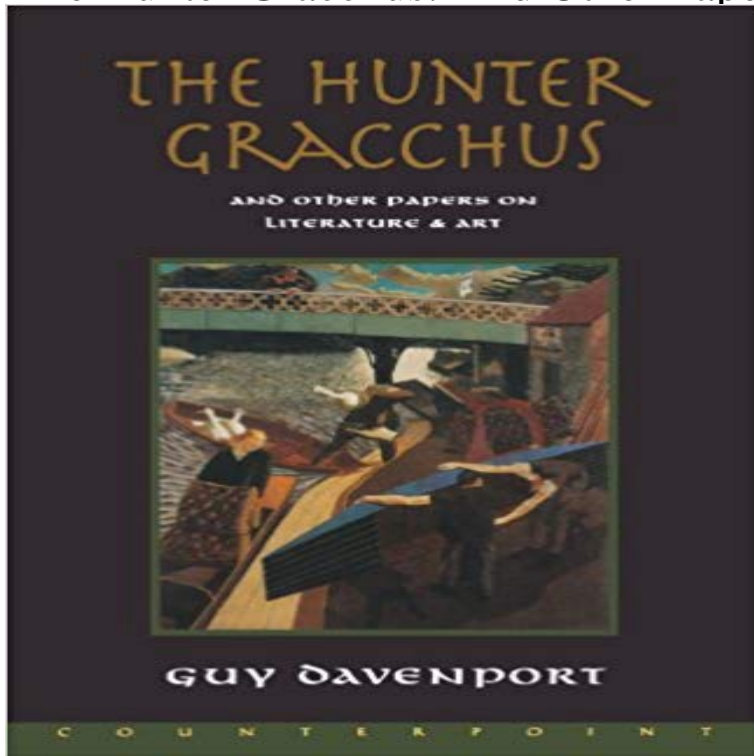


The Hunter Gracchus: And Other Papers on Literature and Art



Open the pages of *The Hunter Gracchus* and step into the remarkable mind of Guy Davenport, one of this country's most provocative writers. Moving effortlessly from snake handling to Wallace Stevens, these essays take delight in an immense range of topics, including art and architecture, religion, and literature. Open the pages of *The Hunter Gracchus* and step into the remarkable mind of Guy Davenport, one of this country's most brilliant and provocative writers. Hardly the typical essay collection, *The Hunter Gracchus* is better described as a collage of ideas, commentary, and criticism from an eclectic stylist whose sentences ring with clarity and originality. Moving effortlessly from snake handling to Wallace Stevens, these essays take delight in an immense range of topics, including art and architecture, religion and literature--all approached from Davenport's deeply personal point of view. In one essay, Davenport recalls a lunch with Thomas Merton at the Ramada Inn, where Merton, already the world's most famous Trappist monk, drank several martinis and held forth on the architecture of Buddhist temples. In another, Davenport finds in postwar modernism a catalogue of our lost innocence. In the stunning title essay, he maps out the world of a posthumously published story by Franz Kafka. Davenport has the singular and joyous ability to read into human artifacts--Picasso's *Guernica*, a pattern of bricks, a Shaker design for easy-to-clean revolving windows. His kinetic prose unfolds surprising connections of influence, transporting readers from the world of the intellectual to the world of the extraordinary. The way I write about texts and works of art, Davenport says in his introductory note, has been shaped by forty years of explaining them to students in a classroom. I am not writing for scholars or fellow critics, but for people who like to read, to

look at pictures, and to know things.

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