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TITLE INFORMATION

I TALK SLOWER THAN I THINK

Bonner, C. D.

C.D. BONNER (138 pp.)

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BOOK REVIEW

A debut memoir that bursts with Southern flavor and charm.

Bonner recounts the lively antics of his rural Georgia childhood in the 1960s and '70s in this pleasant book. In each chapter, he provides a brief slice of Southern life with all the trimmings; for example, in "The Importance of Biscuits," he waxes nostalgic for this small but crucial food ("not just a side dish...a staple") and recalls the care his mother took when preparing them. Three-year-old Bonner's love for them was so strong, in fact, that he once bit into a doorknob, convinced that the white porcelain was actually a biscuit. He suffers another injury in "Keeping Me in Stitches," which outlines an innocent family outing to the beach that ended with the author in the hospital. But this collection of memories is not all painful; as Bonner points out, "the simplest pleasures are surely the sweetest ones," and he writes of the Christmas fun he and his siblings had with the boxes their presents came in and of the birth of his new baby cousin. Throughout, the author captures the slow, easy pace of Southern living, dwelling on the day-to-day activities of a young boy who's encouraged to find adventure all around him. He also recalls less pleasant times, such as when his mother spanked him once at the grocery store for misbehaving, but these memories are always recounted in a context of love and trust. Overall, these brief anecdotes are candid, humorous and enjoyable. The author's ability to see the bright side of any situation makes for a pleasant, undemanding read, and he recreates these stories of his siblings and extended family with loving detail, in straightforward, precise prose. Bonner shows a reverence for his youth that's contagious; as he aptly puts it, he and his siblings "were poor kids living a rich life."

A sweet, gentle book that captures a man's youth in all of its wonder.

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