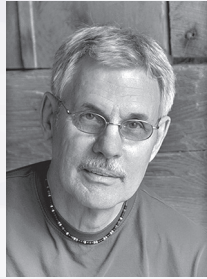


Ultimately hope-filled and healing.



Norbert Krapf, Indiana Poet Laureate from 2008-2010, was repeatedly abused fifty years ago as a young boy by his family's parish priest. Like many survivors, he spent a lifetime trying to put the experience behind him, telling his wife in general terms, but no one else, what had happened to him. Recently, however, when he read that a different priest, accused of abusing boys in three Indiana parishes, had been transferred to a parish near the author's childhood home, Krapf decided he had to go public. He did so in the only way he knew. He wrote poetry. "It began to come," he says, "with volcanic force, night and day."

Krapf discovered four distinct "voices" in these poems: the boy he was, the man he became, his imaginary friend and mentor Mr. Blues, and the priest who abused him. Each voice seeks to explain himself in poetic, albeit sometimes graphic, language. The author's experience as captured in this book is the subject of a PBS documentary and is being considered as the basis for a play.

Catholic Boy Blues is not for the faint of heart nor for those who simply wish to "move on" from the current and historical reality regarding the abuse of children. This collection of moving poems offers anyone—including those in positions of authority and trust with children—a path toward understanding, hope, and healing.

A reading of *Catholic Boy Blues* permits one to glimpse the incredible pain of victims of sexual abuse. The fact that such abuse occurred during the victim's childhood and was inflicted by a priest, a person whom a child would instinctively trust, makes the pain even more hideous. Yet the spirit of Norbert Krapf emerges from this terrible crucible to offer a testimony to the power of God to bring light out of darkness and, finally, life from death.

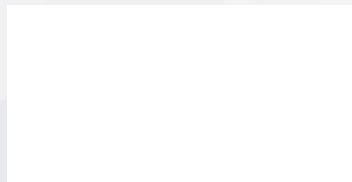
—Archbishop Joseph Tobin, in *The Criterion*,
the newspaper of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis

William Carlos Williams says the "it is difficult / to get the news from poems / yet men die miserably every day / for lack / of what is found there." Today there are men and women all around the globe who are part of the news of child abuse. *Catholic Boy Blues*, this deep journey into the dark night of the abused soul, can prevent further death and lift some of the misery of the horrible experience of childhood abuse. It will rank, along with the work of John of the Cross, as a truthful telling of what a dark night means as well as what it has to teach us. But we owe it to ourselves to read it in the context of the poet's other works, his praise poems, of the blessing that life and existence are and that no one can snuff out.

—Matthew Fox, from the Introduction

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Norbert Krapf

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