



Ascension: John Coltrane And His Quest

Eric Nisenson

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It is the summer of 1976 and Salvo Ursari, a man of retirement age, is walking on a taut wire strung between the Twin Towers of New York's World Trade Center, almost fourteen hundred feet above the city. Far below him in the gaping crowd stands his wife, Anna, to whom he has made a solemn promise: This wire walk will end his career. In this daring moment, Steven Galloway opens his riveting novel about Salvo Ursari, whose life begins in 1919 amid a Transylvanian boyhood inhabited by gypsy folklore and inspired by the bravery of his persecuted people. Salvo's story moves irresistibly from a tragic fire that envelops his family, to street life in Budapest, where he learns the skills of a wire walker, to the carnivals of Europe and the competitive world of the American circus. Most fulfilled when living with paradox, Salvo feels safest while performing startling feats of balance on a wire high above the dangerous world; and most endangered if performing above a net. With compassion, warmth, and blazing originality, *Ascension* combines jaw-dropping storytelling, and fantastical symbolism with mesmerizing detail of Romany and circus culture, and an unforgettable walk with the amazing Salvo Ursari.

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