



## Reading the Ground

By Tera Vale Ragan

The Word Works. Paperback. Condition: New. 86 pages. Dimensions: 8.8in. x 5.9in. x 0.3in. Tera Vale Ragan celebrates the powers of language, heritage, and family in this inventive first collection. Selected for the Hilary Tham Capital Collection by judge Jeanne Larsen, Reading the Ground, Larsen says, gives us Lessons in the Slovak Language-which is to say, lessons in every mothers tongue. They rise out of the great American tale of immigration, embrace the great American mill-town of the 20th century, and make the great American journey to an unknown old country. Ragans consummately woven text is a 21st century book: a brilliant meta-poem; a double-helix of artful words; a gathering that satisfies, sings, erupts. According to Paul Hoover, this is a rich feast of poems relating to the poets Slovakian heritage, structured over historical time. It begins with the proposal of her grandfather by tossing a silk handkerchief at his sweethearts feet. While the wedding guests dance a czardas, theres a terrible act of violence, followed by ritual revenge, imprisonment, and migration to the Duquesne area of Pittsburgh aboard the Aquitania. This is eloquent, moving, and necessary poetry. And Al Young, Poet Laureate for California 2005-2008, says: With feet planted on...

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