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Fiction. African American Studies. Translated from the French. AMONG THE BLACKS consists of two works: Ron Padgett's translation of Raymond Roussel's early story "Parmi les noirs," first published in 1935 in his book *Comment j'ai écrit certain de mes livres*, together with Padgett's memoir focusing upon his own experience among black people. Roussel's story, about a master mariner named White who encounters an African chief named Bootable, is built upon the kind of whimsical and extravagant word play (its first and last sentences are identical except for one letter in one word--"pooltable"/ "Bootable") for which Roussel was idolized by the French Surrealists. In contrast, as he writes in his Afterword, Padgett's memoir "grew out of the nagging need to come to grips with the frustrations of being a white American who had grown up in a racist environment and who, despite his rejections of racism at an early age, had rarely felt unselfconscious in the company of a black person." "What he leaves us with is a work that is like the perfectly preserved temple of a cult which has disappeared without a trace, or a complicated set of tools whose use cannot be discovered. But even though we may never be able to 'use' [Roussel's] work in the way he hoped, we can still admire its inhuman beauty, and be stirred by a language that seems always on the point of revealing its secret, of pointing the way back to the 'republic of dreams' whose insignia blazed on his forehead"--John Ashberry.

Among the Blacks Details

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From Reader Review Among the Blacks for online ebook

Starlon says

Racist bullshit.

Jordan says

I hate the fact that they published another work in the book other than Roussel's. It should have been published alone as the other work doesn't stand up to the original AT ALL and just plain out doesn't belong.

Roussel's AMONG THE BLACKS is excellent and after reading it, you will find yourself using the word "bootable" quite often.
