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Before the National Book Award-winning *Just Kids*, Patti Smith addressed the life and passing of her intimate friend, photographer Robert Mapplethorpe.

Through the linked pieces of *The Coral Sea*, Patti Smith honors her comrade-in-arms Robert Mapplethorpe (1946-1989). She tells the story of a man on an ocean journey to see the Southern Cross, who is reflecting on his life and fighting the illness that is consuming him. Metaphoric and dreamy, this tale of transformation arises from Smith's knowledge of Mapplethorpe from a young man to a mature artist; his close relationship with patron and friend, Sam Wagstaff; his years surviving AIDS; and his ascent into death. *The Coral Sea* is Smith's lyrically compelling recasting of her grief to recapture Mapplethorpe's life in the past and his future in his art. Rich in evocative details, it shows the man beneath the persona.

This edition features a new introduction and new material by Smith.