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Francis Davis's *The History of the Blues* is a groundbreaking rethinking of the blues that fearlessly examines how race relations have altered perceptions of the music. Tracing its origins from the Mississippi Delta to its amplification in Chicago right after World War II, Davis argues for an examination of the blues in its own right, not just as a precursor to jazz and rock 'n' roll. The lives of major figures such as Robert Johnson, Charlie Patton, and Leadbelly, in addition to contemporary artists such as Stevie Ray Vaughan and Robert Cray, are examined and skillfully woven into a riveting, provocative narrative.