



SOMERSAULT

"SOMEWHERE ON THE EARTH . . . GIANTS STILL DO STRIDE AROUND,
AND KENZABURO OE IS ONE OF THEM . . . MAGNIFICENT."

—Garcia Terrel



KENZABURO OE

WINNER OF THE NOBEL
PRIZE FOR LITERATURE

Resumo de Somersault

Kenzaburo Oe is internationally recognized as one of the world's finest writers. When he won the Nobel Prize nearly ten years ago, he announced that he would no longer be writing fiction—or, if he did, that his future work would be radically different from the highly autobiographical fiction he was known for.

Now, with *Somersault*, Oe has broken his silence and shared with us the result of his artistic reorientation, in a magnificent story of the charisma of leaders, the danger of zealotry, and the mystery of faith.

A decade before *Somersault* opens, two men referred to as the Patron and Guide of mankind were leaders of an influential religious movement. When a radical faction of their followers threatened to unleash an apocalypse, they recanted all of their teachings and abandoned their followers.

Now, after ten years of silence, Patron and Guide begin contacting their old followers and reaching out to the public, assisted by a small group of young people who have come to them in recent months.

Just as they are beginning this renewed push, the radical faction kidnaps Guide, holding him captive until his health gives out. Patron and a small core of the faithful, including a painter named Kizu who may become the new Guide, move to the mountains to establish the church's new base, followed by two groups from Patron's old church: the devout Quiet Women, and the Technicians, who have ties to the old radical faction.

The Baby Fireflies, young men from a nearby village, attempt to influence the church with local traditions and military discipline. As planning proceeds for the summer conference that will bring together the faithful and launch the new church in the eyes of the world, the conflicting agendas of these factions threaten to make a mockery of the church's unity—or something far more dangerous.

Ambitious and beautifully told, *Somersault* illuminates the spiritual searching of modern man that makes religious cults so compelling.

Somersault is an astonishing achievement that again confirms Kenzaburo Oe's place among the world's finest writers, even as it takes his body of work in fresh and fertile new directions.

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