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Nota di contenuto	Frontmatter -- Contents -- Prologue A MAN OF MANY WORLDS -- I THE ISLAND OF ST. CROIX -- II COPENHAGEN -- III ICELAND -- IV DESCENDANTS -- Epilogue: Biographies -- Timeline -- Acknowledgments -- Photo Catalog -- Notes -- Bibliography -- Index

The island nation of Iceland is known for many things—majestic landscapes, volcanic eruptions, distinctive seafood—but racial diversity is not one of them. So the little-known story of Hans Jonathan, a free black man who lived and raised a family in early nineteenth-century Iceland, is improbable and compelling, the stuff of novels. In *The Man Who Stole Himself*, Gisli Palsson lays out the story of Hans Jonathan (also known as Hans Jónatan) in stunning detail. Born into slavery in St. Croix in 1784, Hans was taken as a slave to Denmark, where he eventually enlisted in the navy and fought on behalf of the country in the 1801 Battle of Copenhagen. After the war, he declared himself a free man, believing that he was due freedom not only because of his patriotic service, but because while slavery remained legal in the colonies, it was outlawed in Denmark itself. He thus became the subject of one of the most notorious slavery cases in European history, which he lost. Then Hans ran away—never to be heard from in Denmark again, his fate unknown for more than two hundred years. It's now known that Hans fled to Iceland, where he became a merchant and peasant farmer, married, and raised two children. Today, he has become something of an Icelandic icon, claimed as a proud and daring ancestor both there and among his descendants in America. The *Man Who Stole Himself* brilliantly intertwines Hans Jonathan's adventurous travels with a portrait of the Danish slave trade, legal arguments over slavery, and the state of nineteenth-century race relations in the Northern Atlantic world. Throughout the book, Palsson traces themes of imperial dreams, colonialism, human rights, and globalization, which all come together in the life of a single, remarkable man. Hans literally led a life like no other. His is the story of a man who had the temerity—the courage—to steal himself.

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