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Collana	National Poetry Series
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Sommario/riassunto	"Winner of the National Poetry Series Mothers masquerading as witches and sepulchral bellhops who reveal themselves to be fathers: in Justin Boening's debut collection of poems, selected for the National Poetry Series by Wayne Miller, nothing is as it seems. Peopled by figures both uncanny and tragic-lionesses who dance and cry, surgeons who carry with them the trauma of past lives, an opera singer whose notes go awry-Not on the Last Day, but on the Very Last uses the language of dreams and of fairy tales to deliver a keenly felt exploration of family, grief, regret, and belonging. A traveler leaves home for the first time, and asks, "This town / has nothing to offer me anymore- / Why am I still so afraid / to leave it?" In a psychiatrist's office, a patient laments, "They always ask / about my mother. There should be a rule / against inheritance."Here everything stands for something else. But though the Freudian mother and father lurk behind every sequined costume, continue to strip away the masks, Boening suggests, and you'll find an even more primal absence at the center-Nobody, No One, mortality, death. Beyond that, we find, lies only the truth of our relationships with each other. After fighting off a crone-who may or may not be that ever-present mother-the speaker asks, "Why have I made it so difficult to love you?" Shot through with mournfulness, gorgeously spangled in its language-"a squall of chrysanthemums / and the weird"-Not on the Last Day, but on the Very Last is an unforgettable collection about our

human failings and the grace we each seek"--
