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| Nota di contenuto | Frontmatter -- Contents -- Acknowledgments -- References and Abbreviations -- Chapter One. Mad Belief -- Chapter Two. Proustian Jokes -- Chapter Three. Magic -- Chapter Four. Éblouissement -- Chapter Five. What's in a Comma? -- Chapter Six. Walking on Stilts -- Chapter Seven. Bodies and Ghosts -- Chapter Eight. The Citizen of the Unknown Homeland -- Index |
| Sommario/riassunto | Marcel Proust was long the object of a cult in which the main point of reading his great novel <i>In Search of Lost Time</i> was to find, with its narrator, a redemptive epiphany in a pastry and a cup of lime-blossom tea. We now live in less confident times, in ways that place great strain on the assumptions and beliefs that made those earlier readings possible. This has led to a new manner of reading Proust, against the grain. In <i>Mirages and Mad Beliefs</i> , Christopher Prendergast argues the case differently, with the grain, on the basis that Proust himself was prey to self-doubt and found numerous, if indirect, ways of letting us know. Prendergast traces in detail the locations and forms of a quietly nondogmatic yet insistently skeptical voice that questions the redemptive aesthetic the novel is so often taken to celebrate, bringing the reader to wonder whether that aesthetic is but another instance of the mirage or the mad belief that, in other guises, figures prominently in <i>In Search of Lost Time</i> . In tracing the modalities of this self-pressuring voice, Prendergast ranges far and wide, across a multiplicity of ideas, themes, sources, and stylistic registers in Proust's literary |

thought and writing practice, attentive at every point to inflections of detail, in a sustained account of Proust the skeptic for the contemporary reader.
