



THE OFFICERS CAMP

*By Giampiero Carocci.
Marlboro/Northwestern,
cloth, \$49.95; paper, \$15.95.*

The Italian historian Giampiero Carocci's memoir of the two years he spent in German military concentration camps is a small masterpiece. His story begins in 1943, after the fall of Mussolini, when Carocci and another officer were captured by the German Army. Along with many other officers and soldiers, they were packed into a train for deportation. As the men were transferred to camps in Hammerstein (now Czarne, Poland), Nuremberg and finally Dresden, Carocci and his companions became more and more focused on food — they recited their favorite recipes to one another and discussed the caloric value of turnips. Though they were repeatedly offered a chance to better their situation by volunteering to work for the Germans, they refused. Carocci fought his despair by reading anything he could find, but happiness came with an extra morsel of food, a package from home, the warmth of the sun. The disarming honesty, simplicity and humor of Carocci's prose are what gives his story its power. He never shies from describing his own cruelty, envy and disgust, nor does he hesitate to revel in the inspiration his horrifying experience brings him. Published in Italy in 1954, "The Officers Camp" now appears for the first time in English, in a superb translation by George Hochfield.

JENNY MCPHEE