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The New Fall List

This Cloudless Weight is a masterwork of aching beauty and sore truth. With deer-like gentleness and bovine patience, this is a book that compiles the histories that twist and jerk us. Set amid various wars, though mostly World Wars I through II, *This Cloudless Weight* tells of the carrot-haired, apple-cheeked, banana-legged, mango-footed farmboys churned into the fields of France. And of the cunning, rutting hogs bred especially to sniff them out. And of the time-worn, teetering *omas* that lay them end to end. And of the daredevil cyclists leaping rows of the fallen, tears filling their brightly starred helmets. (In addition to those characters, the book is lousy with carvers and tailors and gardeners and photographers and nurses and nuns and smithies and sappers and forensic something-or-others.)

This Cloudless Weight is a powerful evocation of the tempestuousness of place and the unctuousness of destiny. With words muscular and tender that speak of memory as if of a bubbling rash hidden by sleeves and cream, *This Cloudless Weight* transports us through dangerous waterways, calming us with hard-won humour, but failing to warn us of the animatronic sharks. It tattoos self-spun fictions onto our backs. It is a tale of rapid visions, of fragmentary violence, as if told by a stuttering auctioneer. It lobs ideas at our minds and demands that we think fast.

This Cloudless Weight hemorrhages beautiful prose written with a painterly eye, a carpenterly jaw, a salesmanly wrist. Readers lose themselves in the text like children in a ball room. Time and time again, the book's lush imagery and poetic stylings evoke the intricate designs and enveloping comfort of patterned wallpaper – each word placed with the care of a jeweller, each sentence like the strum of a stolen guitar, each paragraph beautiful from ten steps back. Like the slow maturation of our musical tastes, *This Cloudless Weight* dispenses with the stony and brittle emotions of youth and becomes all jazz, jazz, jazz. It is the hot madness of a poetry slam and the cool calm of cottage water. Within such a human theatre as this, you can hear the gentle actors backstage, warming up, doing scales, adjusting moustaches.

This Cloudless Weight provides us with the grace of private passage, with legroom and

extra seats for our delicate, blind pets, too old for storage. Longing and loss are given equal time, and the sorts of desires that infect us are well-represented, too. This is a book that sews together the horizon's clouds and wipes fingerprints off the moon. It holds a beating, burping human heart to the light. It contains many shocks of recognition and furtive spurts of truth, as when we first found those magazines in the woods.

This Cloudless Weight investigates troubling occurrences – with its questions and shadowy deductions, the book interrogates us in a cold, bare room, probing for gaps and inconsistencies, forcing a confession, bringing us coffee in a cup. It is sheer malevolence. It is hard nails and soft rain. Readers will read *This Cloudless Weight* and be changed – from the readers they were to the readers they are to be.

Hand-stitched vellum manuscript available.

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