



A Clown at Midnight: Poems

Andrew Hudgins

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“Recklessness and rigor, in equal measure, mark the stirring poetics of Andrew Hudgins in this fine new book. Hudgins can wrestle a rhyme scheme into submission with one hand tied behind his back and can penetrate the black heart of history with a single, subtly rendered detail. He laughs with Democritus and weeps with Heraclitus and, line by distillate line, contrives a tonic antidote to “the acetone / of American inattention.” — Linda Gregerson

In *A Clown at Midnight* Andrew Hudgins offers a meditation on humor with a refreshing poignancy and cutting wit. He touches on love and nature, but at its core this collection is about the consolations and terrors, the delights and discomforts, of laughter, taking its title from a quote by Lon Chaney Sr.: “The essence of true horror is a clown at midnight.” Skillfully probing paradoxes, Hudgins conjures the titular clown: “Down these mean streets a bad joke walks alone / bruised head held low, chin tucked in tight, eyes down / defiant. He laughs and it turns to a moan.” Hudgins gives us utter honesty and accessible verse, exploring moments both uncomfortable and satirical while probing the impulse to confront life’s most demanding trials with laughter.

“Hudgins’s poems are often funny, hinging on a joke or wisecrack or malapropism, but human nature red in tooth and claw has always been his greatest theme.” — *BookPage*

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