



All-American Poem (APR Honickman 1st Book Prize)

Matthew Dickman

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Winner of the *American Poetry Review*/Honickman First Book Award.

“Matthew Dickman’s all-American poems are the epitome of the pleasure principle; as clever as they are, they refuse to have ulterior intellectual pretensions; really, I think, they are spiritual in character—free and easy and unself-conscious, lusty, full of sensuous aspiration. . . . We turn loose such poets into our culture so that they can provoke the rest of us into saying everything on our minds.”—Tony Hoagland, APR/Honickman First Book Prize judge

"Dickman crystallizes and celebrates human contact, reminding us...that our best memories, those most worth holding on to, those that might save us, will be memories of love....The background, then, is a downbeat America resolutely of the moment; the style, though, looks back to the singing free verse of Walt Whitman and Frank O'Hara....(Dickman's) work sings with all the crazy verve of the West." —*Los Angeles Times*

"Toughness with a smile....(Dickman) breathes the air of Whitman, Kerouac, O'Hara, and Koch, each of whom pushed against the grain of what poetry and writing was supposed to be in their times." —*New Haven Review*

All American Poem plumbs the ecstatic nature of our daily lives. In these unhermetic poems, pop culture and the sacred go hand in hand. As Matthew Dickman said in an interview, he wants the “people from the community that I come from”—a blue-collar neighborhood in Portland, Oregon—to get his poems. “Also, I decided to include anything I wanted in my poems. . . . Pepsi, McDonald’s, the word ‘ass.’”

*There is no one to save us
because there is no need to be saved.
I've hurt you. I've loved you. I've mowed
the front yard. When the stranger wearing a sheer white dress
covered in a million beads
slinks toward me like an over-sexed chandelier suddenly come to life,
I take her hand in mine. I spin her out
and bring her in. This is the almond grove
in the dark slow dance.
It is what we should be doing right now. Scraping
for joy . . .*

Matthew Dickman is the winner of the May Sarton Award from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a poetry editor of *Tin House*, and the coauthor, with brother Michael Dickman, of *50 American Plays*. He lives in Portland, Oregon.

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