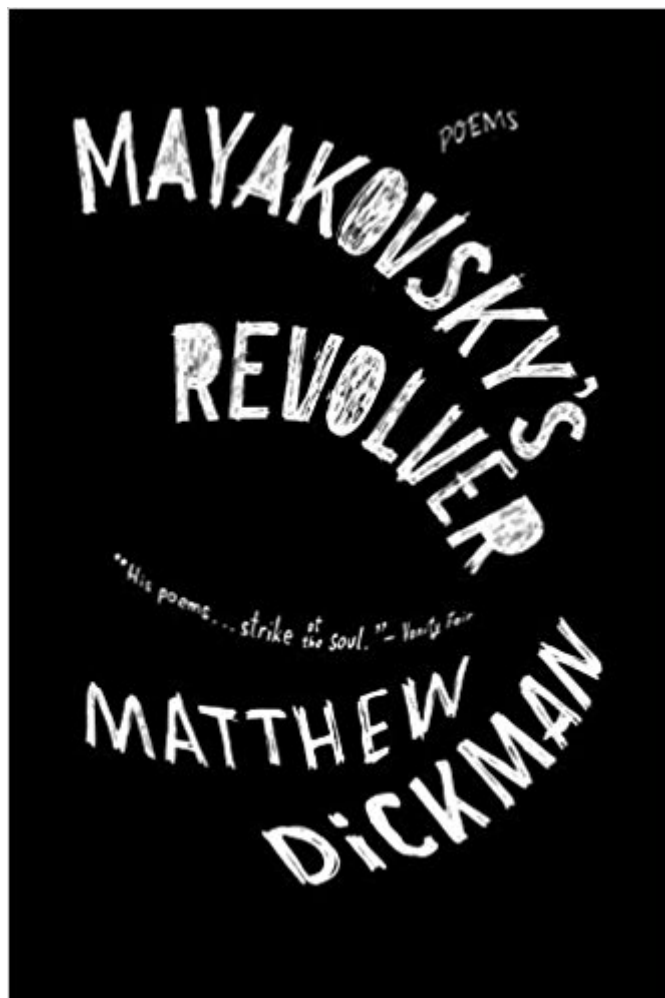


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Mayakovsky's Revolver: Poems



Synopsis

From a dazzling, award-winning young poet, a collection that paints life as a celebration in the dark. At the center of Mayakovsky's *Revolver* is the suicide of Matthew Dickman's older brother. "Known for poems of universality of feeling, expressive lyricism of reflection, and heartrending allure" (Major Jackson), Dickman is a powerful poet whose new collection explores how to persevere in the wake of grief. "Mayakovsky's *Revolver* I keep thinking about the way blackberries will make the mouth of an eight year old look like he's a ghost that's been shot in the face. In the dark I can see my older brother walking through the tall brush of his brain. I can see him standing in the lobby of the hotel, alone, crying along with the ice machine."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Though Dickman, whose first collection, *All-American Poem* (2008), received the May Sarton Award from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, lives in Portland, Oregon, he belongs to the New York School of Poetry. He is not as completely immersed in the quotidian as Frank O'Hara, and his lines lack O'Hara's tensile strength, but Dickman's tone is similar, as is the ambition to evoke but not to capture, and his poems progress at the speed of sensation. Dickman is so committed to his method of digression that all but one poem are similar in length, style, and tone. "The Madness of King George" introduces a second voice, a woman in a bar sitting next to the poet, and the different cadence of speech is astonishing because Dickman's primary voice is so distinctive. Dickman is a curious hybrid; a sophisticate

inclined to pose as a naïf, he cannot escape the grief that threatens to overwhelm this book.

--Michael Autrey --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

His poems . . . strike at the soul. Matthew Dickman's poems go off like a bottle rocket. A book of real immediacy, the kind that re-enacts modern life with all its joys and sorrows. --NPR "His poems . . . strike at the soul. "Matthew Dickman's poems go off like a bottle rocket. "

Matthew Dickman's work really caught me off guard. I came across one of his poems while scrolling through Instagram of all things. Believe it or not there are a lot of excellent poets lurking around on that app. I'm a pretty avid reader but I've never consistently read poetry. I've come across poems that really got my attention but never found a poet whose complete works kept my interest. Poetry is tough because there is so much of it and it's not easily segregated by genre or categorized by someone who is not familiar with it in a technical sense. It can be really tough to find the style that appeals to you. Something about Matthew Dickman's work caught my attention immediately and kept it throughout this book. The prose feels loose at first but as you read on you realize just how carefully measured it is and that Dickman really is a master of his craft. This book contains portraits of grief but also guilt, shame, and love. The work is introspective in a way that is intensely personal. There were moments where I felt like the author himself had let me in too close, revealed too much of the inner workings of his brain to me and I was grateful for it. His portraits of guilt are incredibly effective. Whether it's the story of him and his brother torturing their sister with a dead goldfish or the story about the time he offended someone by telling a joke about "sexy kids" and the guilt he felt afterward. His analysis of himself is so honest and even masochistic that it's hard not to be effected by it. I read this book slow. I took it all in little by little. While I finished it months ago at this point I still pull it out from time to time just to experience my favorite moments over again.

This is my favorite collection of poetry that I've discovered in several years. Dickman's almost spastic verse feels like it feels to live in this time at a certain age. It's powerful, forceful, remarkably honest, and well crafted poetry. His image and imagination are stellar, careful thought out but convincingly reckless. He's a remarkable contemporary talent.

Absolutely love Matthew Dickman's poetry! A few great poems from this book are "Ghost Story", "King", and "Mayakovsky's Revolver". Definitely recommend it!

This is an emotionally taxing collection. In fact, it took me much longer to read than anticipated because I felt that reading it all in one sitting would do it and me a great disservice. However, I've walked away feeling as though I've learned something greater, something deeper. I've found a new friend. I've found a hand to hold in the dark. I'm in love with a book.

I admit that I want a book of poems to be a complete package: beautiful cover, beautiful (even beautifully-disturbing) poems. In this case, the cover didn't really draw me to the purchase and, if I am honest about it, it didn't have to. I have been a fan of the Dickman brothers' poems for many years now. Mayakovsky's *Revolver* fulfills the early promise of Matthew Dickman's earlier works. It is stunning how he lets the words just kidnap the speaker: for the reader, it is, at times, impossible to look away much as it is impossible to look away from an accident scene, even when the blood-covered sheet is apparent at the roadside. In these poems, it is possible to hear a remnant of the times in which we live, desperate times and wonder-filled times. In these poems is some of the glory of being human in this time and place. A book I would highly recommend to others.

Matthew Dickman's "*Mayakovsky's Revolver*" is an impressive collection of elegiac poems on the sorrows and deaths of others (principally, an older brother who committed suicide). Such subject matter could easily result in poetic mawkishness or hysteria, or, at least, monotony, and given the book's almost unrelieved somberness, it is probably best to read the poems only a few at a time, but Dickman has the skill to make the results compelling. His situations and characters can often be grotesque (for instance, a recollection of how he and a friend once taunted a fat boy, or how he and his brother killed a goldfish and then tormented their sister) and his imagery can be odd (as when he compares the moon to "the inside of a jawbreaker/ after all the color has been licked off"), but mere freakishness and sensationalism are avoided by the way Dickman lets his long slow lines flow steadily along like a gray and somber river.

This writing makes my heart tear at the seams. I feel as I study and reread this work that my heart is being crushed while also falling in love with the miracle of life itself simultaneously. Profound, powerful, honest - all adjectives which feel much too canned to do justice to this brilliant and personal offering.

The middle of the book is an elegy to his brother who committed suicide. The book was inspired by Mayakovsky, a Russian poet who shot himself. There is naked pain in many poems and they are very

moving.

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