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Unwelcomeness



Synopsis

The 12 short stories in this collection are titled: Number One Nears the End HB Purity Thanks for the DNA Wilderness Year Secret Boyfriend Son of the Bushes Suicide Note Little Ant Dentist Ski Club Unwelcomeness

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Sean Dungan is a writer new to me and if I'm not mistaken this is his first collection of stories. I was at San Francisco's Silverman Gallery for the "Nothing Moments" exhibition, in which the evocative originals of Gail Swanlund's illustrations for this book were hung, and something about them arrested me; the gallerist indicated a shelf where the "Nothing Moments" books were to be found and I wound up walking away with "Unwelcomeness" tucked into my pocket. The book has its problems but on the whole it's one of the more exciting short story collections I've read in a while and brother, I read a lot. From a few readings, I can sort of grasp Dungan's general outlines as a fictioneer and the topics that seem to interest him most. He is interested in the half-formed and the mutant: his characters often seem incoherent, and male; young men with problems of communication but a desperate desire to get their story out to the world. They are trapped in a hellish society in which individual freedoms are regularly denied, and a inchoate group consciousness emerges in absentia. Though primarily a writer of disconnect and alienation, he is capable of a generally savage, sometimes tender comedy that gives dimension to his narratives, and from what I've read, his imagination is vast as Vonnegut's, jam-packed with insane nooks and alleys. Here and there I thought of Benjamin Weissman, the LA-based fiction writer and a

stablemate of Dungan's at "Nothing Moments" (I walked out of the exhibition with a new book by Weissman as well). Indeed, if the story "Ski Club" in UNWELCOMENESS wasn't actually written by Weissman himself, then it is a loving tribute from an apprentice to il miglior fabbro. Yet Dungan has his own voice and when it makes itself heard it's a strong one.

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