



Bicentennial: Poems

Dan Chiasson

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From the acclaimed poet—a refreshing, singular collection of poems about boys and boyhood, historical cycles and personal history, memory and meaning.

Bicentennial summons the world of Chiasson's seventies childhood in Vermont: early VCRs, snow, erections, pizza, snowmobiles, high-school cliques, and the Bicentennial celebration, but his book is also an elegy for his father, whom he never knew and who died in 2009. In these poems, Chiasson movingly revisits the kind of autobiographical poems he wrote as a young man, but with a new existential awareness that individuals are always vanishing in time, and throughout the collection he ponders time's conundrums. "All of history, even the Romans, / they happen later, tonight sleep tight," he tells his sons at bedtime. "You'll learn this later. Tonight, goodnight." In the topsy-turvy world of *Bicentennial*, history has both happened and is waiting to happen; boys grow up to be men; men never forget what it is to be boys; and fatherhood is the best answer to fatherlessness.

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