



Honest Engine: Poems

By *Kyle Dargan*

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In this his fourth collection, award-winning poet *Kyle Dargan* examines the mechanics of the heart and mind as they are weathered by loss. Following a spate of deaths among family and friends, *Dargan* chooses to present not color-negative elegies but self-portraits that capture what of these departed figures remains within him. Amid this processing of mortality, it becomes clear that he has arrived at a turning point as a writer and a man.

As the title suggests, *Dargan* aspires toward an unflinching honesty. These poems do not purport to possess life's answers or seek to employ language to mask what they do not know. *Dargan* confesses as a means of reaching out to the nomadic human soul and inviting it to accompany him on a walk toward the unknown.

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Editorial Review

Review

This *Honest Engine* is unafraid. It asks questions that men rarely ask: Is there a cure for patriarchy? Must I also think like a fist? Will grief and loss swamp us? Sometimes, true, with the poet we wrestle despair, 'tumbling from an apex of grace.' But memory can restore, can 'make enough flames bloom.' Indeed, Kyle Dargan's stunning, hurting poems bring us finally to a wary hopefulness that we might begin, at last, to reach across our divisions, racial and otherwise. (Sarah Browning *executive director of Split This Rock and author of Whiskey in the Garden of Eden*)

Honest Engine reveals Kyle Dargan to be a poet fully in command. He marshals the resources of sound and line and syntax into lucid and quietly insistent poems that soldier through loss and wonder to a kind of peace. And yet Dargan's command, urgent as it is, comes with a beautiful humility. I am awed by this book's wisdom and calm clarity and moved by its faith. I will read it again and again. (Keith D. Leonard *author of Fettered Genius: The African American Bardic Poet from Slavery to Civil Rights*)

These poems are a touchstone for future readers about important issues?small public debates?an awareness of society's demise. . . . Dargan's process?known interest, and sure hand?change social calculations to literary art. (Grace Cavalieri *Washington Independent Review of Books*)

[Dargan's] poems look head-on at an end that stretches out beyond our imaginations, at the middle spaces between life, memory, and death. . . . The lines breathe space into the unknown. (Tanya Paperny *Washington City Paper*)

[A] book full of thought-provoking images and ideas. (Rose Solari *Santa Fe Writers Project Quarterly*)

Honest Engine's ultimate lesson is that home is the place of the necessary labors. And as the book that highlights a four-volume journey though the rough terrains of America, it's a refreshingly prayerful and sympathetic view. (Rigoberto González *Los Angeles Review of Books*)

These are poems of the critic, the perpetual outsider, the haunted man, the insomniac. These are poems that peer deeply and delve into the parts of ourselves we might not like, but know. The collection works because the speaker is not exempt from his own penetrating eye, and because, as much as he details his cynicism, he is a lover of all that's human and flawed. The most honest engine we have is the heart, and in this book, Dargan offers his. I look forward to reading more work from this relentless poet. (Laura Swearingen-Steadwell *The Rumpus*)

About the Author

KYLE DARGAN's poetry collections include *Logorrhea Dementia: A Self-Diagnosis* (Georgia); *Bouquet of Hungers* (Georgia), which received the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award; and *The Listening* (Georgia), which was a winner of the Cave Canem Poetry Prize. He is the former managing editor of *Callaloo* and the founder and current editor of *POST NO ILLS* magazine. He is an associate professor of literature and creative writing at American University.

Users Review

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Ashley Downs:

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