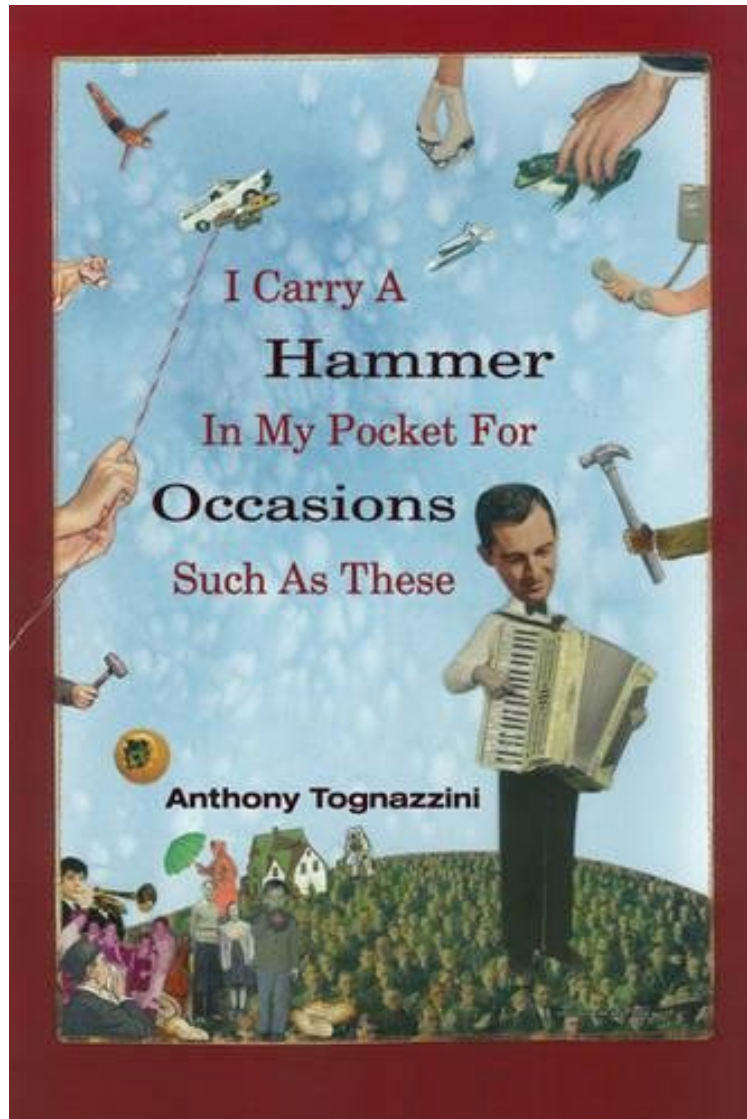


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Anthony Tognazzini

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Anthony Tognazzini : I Carry A Hammer In My Pocket For Occasions Such As These (American Readers Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised I Carry A Hammer In My Pocket For Occasions Such As These (American Readers Series):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Michael P AlboI loved these stories...they are clear,

weird, enduring, and hover between poetry and fiction in the best way.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Anthony Tognazzini Flashed Me His Fiction And I Liked It!By MatchI didn't just devour this book, I licked every word off every page and cried when it was all gone. I also loved the aftertaste.If you like Aimee Bender, Barry Yourgrau, Lydia Davis, Donald Barthelme, you'll enjoy Tognazzini.Buy it, read it, spread the word. His stuff is yummy-yum good!2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Fine Collection of FlashBy J. Conrad GuestI often long for a simpler life, with fewer complications and distractions, in which my attention span can occasionally linger to enjoy a particular moment. The sun in my life reached its zenith a few years ago and is picking up speed as it drops toward the horizon and so I tend to resent that, as a society, we boast of our superior ability to multi-task even as we sheepishly admit to the negative effect of refusing to take time out to occasionally clear the mechanism. That said, I've resisted "flash fiction" as something that caters to our ever-shortening attention span.For the uninitiated, flash fiction contains all of the classic story elements: protagonist, conflict, and resolution; but unlike the traditional short story, the limited word length often leaves some of these elements to only be implied in the written storyline, which is perhaps best exemplified by Ernest Hemingway's six-word flash, "For sale: baby shoes, never worn."Although it can be traced back to Aesop's Fables, with the likes of Chekhov, O. Henry, Kafka, H.P. Lovecraft and Ray Bradbury contributing, flash fiction is enjoying a resurgence on the Internet. Although I sometimes cringe from the niche it fills in our fractured society, despite all of its professed connectivity through cell phones and email, flash is a viable art form that presents a challenge to the writer he or she doesn't normally face when writing a longer piece: strictly meat and bones writing without all of the side dishes.Anthony Tognazzini seems to have mastered this literary art form with his collection of flash fiction, *I Carry a Hammer In My Pocket for Occasions Such as These*. Tognazzini understands the concept, in flash fiction, that what is left unsaid is as equally important as what is said. In flash, less is more.Composed of fifty-seven pieces ranging in length from a single paragraph to several pages, none hit the reader over the head, yet most hit the nail on the head with their brevity, focus and message. From the opening piece, *A Primer*, in which a naked man paints himself into the landscape, to the title piece about a brief encounter between strangers on the street, to *A Telephone Conversation with My Father* (yeah, they really do love each other), to *The Enigma of Possibility* -- how can a man with the longest tongue in the world manage to find a way to pay the rent in the aftermath of having just lost his job? -- to *Working Out with Kafka*, where Kafka meets himself while riding a bike crossing a bridge, to *Old House* -- "I know how lonely the house is when there is no one to live there," to *Baseball Is Dangerous but Love Is Everything*, where love cures a young man's "not-right scramble and his thinking irregular slightly," the result of a childhood beaming on the head with a baseball bat, *I Carry a Hammer* is a fine collection of flash that ranges from the fantastical to the commonplace, that contains humor and portrays grief and loss, that turns the mundane into the fascinating, and is almost always thought-provoking.Tognazzini's voice is fresh, his narrative sharp: My stomach jumped like an angry, barking dog and I spun, throwing up in every direction. When I finished, I regarded the abstract, brown-red splashes on the tile. I thought, Pollock, and it seems tailor-made for flash; yet for some reason, perhaps because their text lack a surgeon's precision with a scalpel, the longer pieces, particularly *Gainesville, Oregon -- 1962* -- don't work as well. Tognazzini's talent seems to "flash" with brilliance more often in the flash element.Still, the overall effect of reading *I Carry a Hammer* is addicting: you never know what you're going to get when you turn the next page, but you can't refrain from taking a peek.Recommended.-- From "The Smoking Poet," literary ezine, Summer 2007 Issue

Reading Anthony Tognazzini is like having a surprise party thrown in your honor on every page. *I Carry A Hammer In My Pocket For Occasions Such As These* turns cartwheels, plants daisies, and sings love songs in honor of all that is strange, sad, serious, and sublime about being alive.Myla Goldberg, author of *Bee Season* *I Carry A Hammer In My Pocket For Occasions Such As These* is a collection of fifty-seven pieces that range in length from compressed paragraphs to ten-page stories. Characters, voices, and surreal scenarios are unified in a playful vision of the world sustained by metaphor, memory, cartoon, tragedy, love story, and song.Speed and brevity are a large part of the collections design. In a culture where attention spans are shorter and more fractured, the need for a literature for the subway and the waiting roomsomething to resonate in the smaller gaps of our livesis emerging. To this end, *I Carry A Hammer In My Pocket For Occasions Such As These* is quick, colloquial, and comic, yet challenges readers to think. It offersat a glancea journey into a fictional world that is poetic and narrative, fantastic and familiar, accessible and adventurous.The Difference Although I was never an early riser, my father always counseled me to rise with the sun. Early bird gets the worm! he told me. Sure, I said, but the worm who sleeps late, lives. Anthony Tognazzini lives in New York City, where he makes his living as a teacher and freelance journalist. His awards include an AWP Award, an Academy of American Poets prize, a Greer Artist Foundation Fellowship, and a Hemingway Fellowship.

About the AuthorAnthony Tognazzini has appeared in *Quarterly West*, *Double Room*, *Pindeldyboz*, *Hayden's Ferry*, *Mississippi*, *Salt Hill*, and *Alaska Quarterly*, among others. He has received a Pushcart nomination, an award from the Academy of American Poets, and fellowships to the Prague Summer Writers' Workshop and Ledig House Writer's

Colony. He holds an MFA from Indiana University.