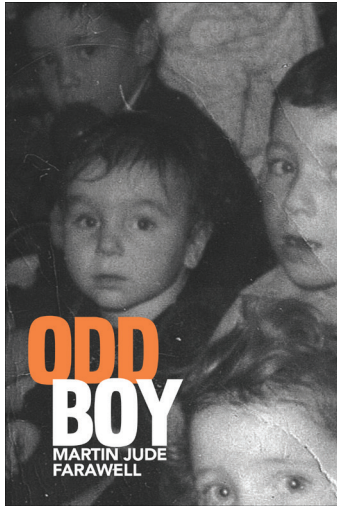


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ODD BOY



Author: Martin Jude Farawell

Title: *Odd Boy*

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MARTIN JUDE FARAWELL

is the director of the Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival. His poems have appeared in the chapbook *Genesis: A Sequence of Poems* (New Spirit Press); in journals such as *Cortland Review*, *Orion*, *Paterson Literary Review*, and *Southern Review*; and anthologies, including *Outsiders* and *The Traveler's Vade Mecum*. His plays have been produced in theaters from South Africa to Los Angeles. A graduate of New York University's Creative Writing Program, he has been the recipient of a writing fellowship from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and a frequent Pushcart Prize nominee. He lives in rural Pennsylvania with writer Cheryl Solimini.



SUMMARY

In poems at once dazzling and trussed to quietude, Martin Jude Farawell's *Odd Boy* traverses a fretwork of silence and sonority. From the solemn pews of a Catholic childhood, the improvised dance floor at his wedding, and the mossy underbelly of late and early spring times, Farawell explores what it means to learn and unlearn his constellation of selves: boy, son, brother, husband, human, believer in the beauty of the smallest hour. Whether imagining the creation of the original family through the Biblical canon or recounting the violence of his own, *Odd Boy* is an atlas for the pursuit of a fierce gentleness. Farawell's poems pursue desire and its specter in landscapes large and small, perennially unafraid of their own song, unafraid to take us to the heart of it: "But now, / it is the very autumn / of autumn. / What was it? / What I wanted?"

PRAISE FOR **ODD BOY**



“There is a burnished clarity gleaming in the poems of Martin Jude Farawell, born of urgency and honesty, tenderness and rage, suffering and transcendence—poems from the marrow of life and death itself. In vivid, even visceral language, the poet evokes the breath of an alcoholic father, the din of voices warring just outside the door, the failure of a ‘lapsed Catholic’ to suppress the giggles at a funeral, the statues of saints helpless at the deathbed, the strange terrors of carousel horses at the pier. ‘If I sing joy, even sing joy, I weep,’ declares Farawell, and yet there is song, even joy, as he transforms the history of violence into art, refusing to pass that violence along to the next generation, defiantly rejecting Abraham and Isaac for the call of the birds and the sea. We need this deeply human, and humane, song. Keep singing.”

**MARTÍN
ESPADA**

“Martin Jude Farawell’s *Odd Boy* summons us to the very heart of beauty with an irrepressible voice: ‘I was walking / my awkward, unbalanced act / between boy and man...’ These poems travel far inward to the land of suffering and the road out, with such lovely, ecstatic lines that collide with the courage of saying things clearly. We are fortunate witnesses to a life fully human, a speaker of great depth who has chosen to sing now: ‘To spend your song / singing your way there, / is to be less / of a singing thing / here.’ A remarkable book.”

**JAN
BEATTY**

“Whether they dramatize scenes from a Catholic boyhood of smirking resistance to orthodoxy or the paralyzing fears of bodyhood in a violent family, Martin Jude Farawell’s poems in *Odd Boy* introduce us to a titular hero whose purpose in living is simply to survive and grow past despair into an open and affirmative manhood. It’s an earnest quest enacted in richly textured, alertly observed poems that hymn the liminal places of body, nature, and myth where hope might happen, where the self is lured toward risk and vulnerability, those necessary preludes to love. We have here an eloquent singer of both joy and terror—those complex, linked promises that are the meaning of our mortal world. Welcome a beautiful singer of that world, which is his world and which, through these wondrous poems, also becomes ours.”

**GREGORY
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