

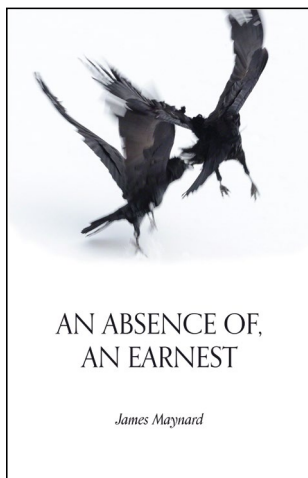
AN ABSENCE OF, AN EARNEST

by James Maynard

for reviews, interviews, and coverage opportunities, please contact Heather Brown/Mind the Bird Media
heather@mindthebirdmedia.com

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from An Absence Of, An Earnest

Ten years. So write a song
To sing the slow train home.

About the possum and the owl,
Or the badger and the bear,

Time was when I was a young man wild
Husky and sinning in the fresh mountain air.

Fear came later. The sapling grew to such a height
Some limbs began to die. Still, says I,

"I'm alright—ja, ja oui, oui,
Sí, sí—the ship's weathered

But there's strong wood, and the crew's
Not so rich as they'd wish to be."

Like a crow drops a walnut from a certain height,
Careful to fall as the walnut falls,

This poem I'm meant to write, ten years
To crack its contents in the sudden white

Where the crow had perched—
As raindrops pock the half-baked clay

Raising the aroma of wet earth,
This poem rises from a name, and from a distance

An
Absence

Splashes back to mind. Gabriel. Wait.
The scar is a clean scar.

"James Maynard has taken his grief and given it a shape and a life in this sustained elegy. *An Absence of, an Earnest* has a gentle, touching voice that illustrates how time does not diminish loss, and when we read an unfinished sentence or see just white after a comma, we feel it."

—Carl Adamshick, Editor of Tavern Books,
author of *Receipt*

James Maynard received his M.F.A. in Poetry from the University of Alabama. He has twice been awarded the Alabama Prison Arts & Education fellowship. His poetry has appeared in many journals, online and in print, most recently *Permafrost*, *New Orleans Review*, and *Otis Nebula*. A chapbook, *Throwaways*, is available on his website. Currently residing in his hometown of Portland, Oregon, James spends time writing poetry, gardening, developing websites for his favorite bookstores or presses, and, most recently, with his son. Find more poems and information at jamesmaynardpoetry.com.

Early Praise for An Absence Of, An Earnest

Reviews, Links, and Interviews