



The Primitive Observatory (Crab Orchard Series in Poetry)

Gregory Kimbrell

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The poems of *The Primitive Observatory*, set roughly in the Gilded Age, take readers into a dreamy, alluring world where hapless travelers, doomed heirs, and other colorful types grapple with horrors. Within the pages of this book, we find a group of cousins who wager their pets in endless games of mahjong, a village whose inhabitants all dream the same dreams, and Maurice, who watches Greta Garbo movies while waiting for death in the macabre home of his grandfather, a man suspected of sinister hypnosis and unspeakable crimes.

Kimbrell explores such themes as memory, class prejudice, family violence, and greed in a flamboyant, yet matter-of-fact style to create verse that is both amusing and unsettling. Combining prose that evokes H. P. Lovecraft, classical mythology, and Marcel Proust with the look and taut line of traditional formalist verse, the poems appear on the page as perfect rectangles, yet revel in narrative and linguistic absurdities.

The Primitive Observatory offers a dark and evocative experience through the tangible grotesque. Fans of David Lynch, Franz Kafka, Edward Gorey and the like will be startled, excited, and pleased by this entertaining and disturbing book of poetry.

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