



News from

Red Hen Press

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## Working Backwards from the Worst Moment of My Life

Stories by

Rob Roberge

A new collection of short stories from a writer who's been called "the poet laureate of the articulately disenfranchised." Dark and thrilling, these carefully wrought tales firmly place him in the tradition of Bukowski, Hammett, and Denis Johnson.



*Working Backwards from the Worst Moment of My Life*

Stories by Rob Roberge

ISBN: 978-1-59709-165-7

5 x 8; Trade paperback

112 pages

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### Biographical note:

**Rob Roberge** teaches writing at the Antioch University MFA program, UC Riverside's Palm Desert MFA program, and the UCLA Extension Writers' Program, where he received the Outstanding Instructor Award in Creative Writing in 2003. His stories have been featured in *ZYZZYVA*, *Chelsea*, *Other Voices*, *Alaska Quarterly Review*, and the "Ten Writers Worth Knowing" issue of *The Literary Review*. His work has also been anthologized in *Another City* (City Lights, 2001), *It's All Good* (Manic D Press, 2004), and *SANTI: Lives of the Modern Saints* (Black Arrow Press, 2007). Newer work is scheduled to appear, or has appeared, in *Penthouse*, *Black Clock*, and *OC Noir*. He plays guitar and sings with several LA bands, including the legendary punk pioneers, The Urinals. In his spare time, he restores and rebuilds vintage amplifiers and quack medical devices.

### Praise for *Working Backwards from the Worst Moment of My Life*:

"These fiercely original small works explore the roughest off-road trail of men's lives, a place where the road to redemption has long ago been left behind, and all that's left is grief and violent action. Bathed in a prose of sensual texture—the taste of barbed wire, the roar of rusted engines, the scent of blood and dust and madness—Roberge's collection blooms in the mind long after the last page has been turned."

—Janet Fitch, author of *Paint it Black* and *White Oleander*

"*Working Backwards from the Worst Moment of My Life* confirms what everyone should already know: Rob Roberge is one of the finest short story writers working today. His vision of life is something like Denis Johnson's, with Neil Young and Crazyhorse as the soundtrack, provided both dipped their toes into the surreal every now and then just to get some relief from the pressures of the world. A nuanced, violent and, ultimately, deeply felt collection of stories."

—Tod Goldberg, author of *Living Dead Girl* and *Simplify*



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### More Praise for *Working Backwards from the Worst Moment of My Life*:



“The characters populating *Working Backwards from the Worst Moment of My Life* exist on a perpetual edge: of transgression, addiction, no-win decisions, desire, the law, and sometimes survival itself. Rob Roberge possesses an unflinching eye, rendering perfectly the intensity, hilarity and numbness of small moments that often double as last chances. This is a rollicking read, so fast and enjoyable that by the time the punch of sadness hits you, you’re too far gone to go anywhere other than where Roberge leads.”

—Gina Frangello, author of *My Sister’s Continent*

“Subtly, deftly, Rob Roberge elevates the ordinary to the extraordinary. His surprising, often darkly humorous stories take the reader to places rarely visited by even our boldest writers. The prose is clean and tough and powerful, marking Roberge as a truly fine and formidable talent.”

—James Brown, author of *This River* and *The Los Angeles Diaries*

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### From “Border Radio”

When I was thirteen years old, my father killed a man in front of me. The man my father killed was, I’m pretty sure, a stranger to my father. The man my father killed got into an argument with my father over the price of a parts car in our yard. The man my father killed had a wife who’d said he’d answered an ad in the paper and had gone to look at a used car. My father was a state trooper. He said that the man never made it to our house to look at the car.

I have no idea where my father took the man he killed’s car, but I do know he drove it away with work gloves on after he had gotten rid of the body. I have no idea where he took the body, either, but the man my father killed was never found, as far as I know. Other cops believed my father’s story and no one ever asked my father about that man again. The last I saw of the man my father killed was when my father threw him in the back of his GMC pickup and drove out of our driveway and I stood there watching until he was a rusted red dot in the distance.



—from *Working Backwards from the Worst Moment of My Life*



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