



News from

Red Hen Press

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## Gone & Gone

Poetry by

Rodney Wittwer

*Gone & Gone* takes place at the junctions of desire and despair, memory and mortality. The poems are concerned with the ways in which we try to orient ourselves in an often incomprehensible world—the often contradictory impulses that propel us, the fractious discontent that can stifle us. We attempt to make connections to people, to places, but when does comfort lead to stasis or stagnation? Is transit merely transitory? What is the point of all our “movement” in a world we will most certainly depart? Approaching the desirable but never quite attaining it, the “awful rowing” here is toward balance. Even if the ultimate destination is death (and all the frantic activity in the world can’t alter that), we are guided by a capable, discerning voice, or rather, voices, that are channeled, but also absorbed and integrated. There is neither disillusion nor redemption here, just an honest grappling with what being human entails.

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*Gone & Gone*

Poetry by Rodney Wittwer

ISBN: 978-1-59709-237-1

6 x 9; Tradepaper

80 pages

Price: US \$17.95

Release Date: September 1, 2012

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### Biographical note:

**Rodney Wittwer** is a native of Wisconsin. He received a B.A. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1981 and his M.A. from the Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins University in 1983. After moving to Boston, he spent 16 years as the Director of Operations for the Hub Group—Boston, a transportation logistics company. Since leaving that position, he has divided his time between writing, freelance editing, and working with his wife in her clothing design business. His poems have appeared in *The Antioch Review*, *Barrow Street*, *Cimarron Review*, *DIAGRAM*, *Hayden’s Ferry Review*, *The Literary Review*, *Memorious*, *Pebble Lake Review*, *Pleiades*, *Ploughshares*, and *Verse Daily*, among others. *Gone & Gone* is his first book; earlier versions were a semi-finalist/finalist for several book prizes, including those from Cleveland State University Poetry Center, Elixir Press, Marsh Hawk Press, Tupelo Press, and the University of Wisconsin Brittingham/Pollak Awards. Wittwer currently lives in W. Medford, Massachusetts.

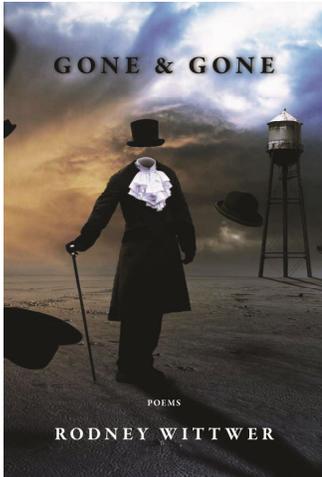
### Praise for *Gone & Gone*:

“Rodney Wittwer’s *Gone & Gone* is a gorgeous breaking open of the world we live in. Wittwer debunks the orchestrations of nostalgia to discover the music of lament and the song of tribute coexisting beneath the surface of our lives. I dare you to read this book and try to walk back out into the wide and beautifully flawed world unchanged by it.”

—Brian Turner, author of *Phantom Noise* and *Here, Bullet*



**More Praise for *Gone & Gone*:**



“Rodney Wittwer would like to destroy every good-for-nothing promise the world has ever produced, every promise that ever turned out to be a lie or became a secret and withdrew into a cave. He just about does so. There is a special kind of romance to this sort of thing—not the fakery of some soft-core theater of enchanted disenchantment, but the heady pleasures of getting to kick-box your way out of the cantina on a Saturday night, that week’s paycheck way way gone. One feels the night breezes blowing astringent and wild on such a night, and all over these poems too. Bravo!”

—David Rivard, author of *Otherwise Elsewhere*

“Wittwer is one of our great singers, and he is keeping things in tune for all of us; no matter how strange, how utterly original, how flip or fancy, how dark or danceable these poems are, they all over-brim the cup with life—fiery, intimate, contemporary life. Here is our unofficial story; a jagged, ever-changing and often frightening one that seems to bustle with lunatics of all types, but also with love and extraordinary tenderness.”

—David Daniel, author of *Star Bird*

“Aunt Aubade—godrestherbittersoul—feared the special people, as in: *so-and-so is a special person, let us give them latitude*: so we’d cross to the lackluster, side of the street. Special people, you know the breed?—people who eat nail guns or levitate, people who spit fire and vanish without a trace. Rodney Wittwer is *très spécial*. He writes charms called poems that dispense with the discreet uniform of humdrum gestures to turn our world upside out and inside down. Catch this spell: ‘Three rings bite the nose, / incredible the way the old tent glows.’ I’m cursed to adore Wittwer and now, so are you.”

—Peter Jay Shippy, 2002 Iowa Poetry Prize winner, author of *Thieves’ Latin*

“This first collection is marked by the authority and fearlessness of the voice, one willing to say and risk much in poems that are fresh, vivid, and, at a time when books often echo one another, utterly unique.”

—SP of *Mead Magazine*

**From “Silly Love Songs”**

*Kiss*

“Well of course” she says “of course  
your missives gusted like tumble weeds  
across the ghost town of my life,  
you fucking slob, you big fat nerve.”  
Then she sweetly cuts a melon down  
the middle & takes the dripping red  
chunks out to the garden, the one  
full of food, flowers & guests.

—from *Gone & Gone*

