



Elegy for a Broken Machine: Poems

Patrick Phillips

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The poet Patrick Phillips brings us a stunning third collection that is at its core a son's lament for his father. This book of elegies takes us from the luminous world of childhood to the fluorescent glare of operating rooms and recovery wards, and into the twilight lives of those who must go on. In one poem Phillips watches his sons play "Mercy" just as he did with his brother: hands laced, the stronger pushing the other back until he grunts for mercy, "a game we played // so many times / I finally taught my sons, // not knowing what it was, / until too late, I'd done." Phillips documents the unsung joys of midlife, the betrayals of the human body, and his realization that as the crowd of ghosts grows, we take our places, next in line. The result is a twenty-first-century memento mori, fashioned not just from loss but also from praise, and a fierce love for the world in all its ruined splendor.

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