



We Almost Disappear

David Bottoms

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"An exquisite storyteller."—*The Southern Review*

"David Bottoms's poems just get better and better."—*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

"One finds here what one expects in a book of good Southern poems: clear narratives . . . evocative images, searching irony, and meditative poise." —*Library Journal*

Rooted in the customs of Southern families and peopled with undertakers, bluegrass musicians, daughters practicing karate, and elderly parents, David Bottoms' poems are generous, insightful, and lean headlong into familial wisdom. Past and present interweave with grandmothers spitting tobacco juice, ponds "filled with construction runoff," and the boyhood home-site paved over for a KFC. This is Bottoms' most personal and heartbreaking book.

From "My Daughter Works the Heavy Bag":

*A bow to the instructor,
then fighting stance, and the only girl in karate class faces the heavy bag.
Small for fifth grade—willow-like, says her mother—
sweaty hair tangled like blown willow branches.*

*The boys try to ignore her. They fidget against the wall, smirk,
practice their routine of huff and feint.
Circle, barks the instructor,
jab, circle, kick, and the black bag wobbles on its chain.*

*Again and again, the bony jewels of her fist
jab out in glistening precision,
her flawless legs remember arabesque and glissade.
Kick, jab, kick, and the bag coughs rhythmically from its gut.*

The boys fidget and wait . . .

David Bottom, Georgia's Poet Laureate, was inducted into the Georgia Writers Hall of Fame in 2009. He teaches at Georgia State University and co-edits *Five Points* magazine. He lives in Marietta, Georgia.

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