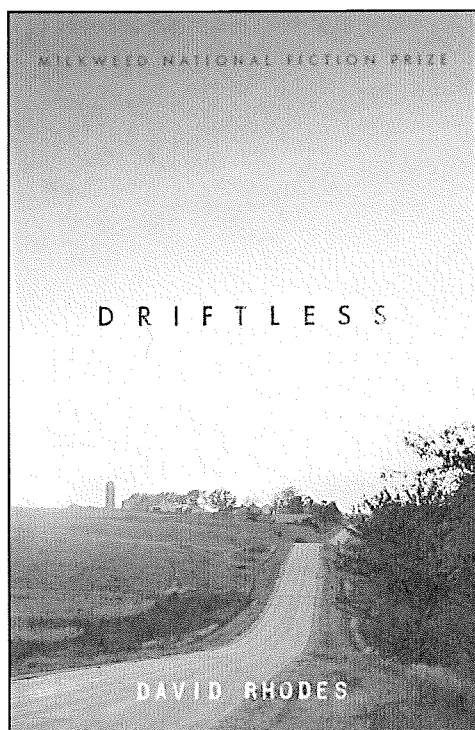


BOOK NEWS

MILKWEED EDITIONS

For Immediate Release

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Driftless by David Rhodes

Publication date: October 7, 2008

ISBN: 978-1-57131-059-0

\$24.00 Hardcover

“Affecting as it is pleasantly overstuffed.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

“Encompassing and incisive, comedic and profound,
Driftless is a radiant novel of community and courage.”

—*Booklist* (STARRED REVIEW)

A Major American Writer Returns After a Thirty-Year Silence

When David Rhodes' first three novels were published in the mid-seventies, he was acclaimed as “one of the best eyes in recent fiction” (John Gardner), and compared favorably to Sherwood Anderson. In 1976, a motorcycle accident left him paralyzed from the chest down, and unpublished for the subsequent three decades.

With *Driftless*, Rhodes returns to the midwestern landscape he knows so well, offering a fascinating and entirely unsentimental portrait of a town apparently left behind by the march of time. Home to a few hundred people yet absent from state maps, Words, Wisconsin, comes richly to life by way of an extraordinary cast of characters. Among them, a middle-aged couple guards the family farm from the mendacious schemes of their milk co-operative; a lifelong paraplegic suddenly regains the use of her legs, only to find herself crippled by fury at her sister and caretaker; a woman of conflicting impulses and pastor of the local Friends church stumbles upon an enlightenment she never expected; a cantankerous retiree discovers a cougar living in his haymow, haunting him like a childhood memory; and a former drifter forever alters the ties that bind a community together.

Intimate and funny, wise and generous, *Driftless* is an unforgettable story of contemporary life in rural America.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

As a young man, David Rhodes worked in fields, hospitals, and factories across Iowa. After receiving an MFA from the Iowa Writer's Workshop in 1971, he published *The Last Fair Deal Going Down* (Atlantic/Little Brown, 1972), *The Easter House* (Harper & Row, 1974), and *Rock Island Line* (Harper & Row, 1975). In 1976, a motorcycle accident left him paralyzed from the waist down. *Driftless* is his first book since. Rhodes lives with his wife, Edna, in rural Wonewoc, Wisconsin.

Praise for *DRIFTLESS*

"*Driftless* has been a long time coming, but definitely worth the wait. This is David Rhodes' most accomplished work yet—vividly imagined, shrewd, and compassionate. He is a master at uncovering the extraordinary lives of seemingly ordinary people. The characters of his small rural town become as mysterious, interconnected, and richly idiosyncratic as the landscape they struggle against and embrace. A wonderful novel."

—Joseph Kanon, author of *Los Alamos*

Additional praise for David Rhodes

"A brilliant writer." —*Cleveland Plain-Dealer*

"Wildly imaginative." —*Saturday Review*

"Rhodes proves that there is still vigorous life in the dark Gothic roots of the great American novels." —*The Tennessean*

"Nothing in Rhodes' vision is secondhand." —John Gardner, *On Becoming a Novelist*

David Rhodes is available for interviews. Contact Jessica Deutsch, 612-215-2563, Jessica_deutsch@milkweed.org

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Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

Issue: September 1, 2008

★ **Driftless.**

Rhodes, David (Author)

Oct 2008. 416 p. Milkweed, hardcover, \$24.00. (9781571310590).

By the end of the darkly rhapsodic novel *Rock Island Line* (1975), July Montgomery has suffered enough tragedies for several cursed lifetimes even though he is only 22. His creator, on the other hand, was riding high as each of his three novels met with acclaim. But Rhodes was about to face his own season of loss. Now, in a triumphant return after 30 years (see the adjacent “Story behind the Story” for details), Rhodes picks up the thread of July’s life with deepened powers, writing not in shadow but in light. As for July, after two decades of drifting, he has finally found peace in the small town of Words, Wisconsin. Respected and cherished, he is the hub of this brimming novel, each spoke a suspenseful story line about the unexpectedly dramatic lives of the good people of Words. The compelling cast includes Graham, a farmer, and Cora, his whistleblower wife intent on exposing agribusiness corruption; Winifred, the high-strung pastor; and the incredible Brasso sisters: large, nurturing Violet and tiny, smart Olivia, who rules the book from her wheelchair. In vividly realized scenes involving family secrets, legal battles, gambling, and miracle cures, Rhodes illuminates the wisdom acquired through hard work, the ancient covenant of farming, and the balm of kindness. Encompassing and incisive, comedic and profound, *Driftless* is a radiant novel of community and courage.

— *Donna Seaman*