

MY FATHER'S DIET



Author: Adrian Nathan West

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Instantly relatable, impeccably realized, and grimly hilarious, My Father's Diet is an autopsy of antiquated notions of manhood, and the perfect, bite-sized novel for a world always keen to mistake narcissism for introspection.

In a broken-down Middle American town, the disintegration of a struggling family – its ambitions and emotions worn thin – is laid bare through the cold eyes of its only son. While studying at the local community college to finish his degree, he works what his divorced parents deem to be menial jobs and tries to stay out of their way, keeping his pitiless observations about their lives to himself. He says nothing about his semi-estranged father's doomed attempts to find meaning in strip-mall spirituality. He says nothing about his mother's willingness to subjugate herself to men he deems unworthy. He says nothing about the anonymity and emptiness to which their social classes and places of birth seem to have condemned everyone he knows, robbing them of even the vocabulary to express their grievances. He says nothing about his own pity, disgust, compassion, tenderness, and love – and when his father enters a bodybuilding competition, he swallows his scorn and agrees to help.

The author

Adrian Nathan West grew up in the United States and lives in Spain. He has translated more than twenty books from Spanish, Catalan, and German, among them Rainald Goetz's *Insane*, Pere Gimferrer's *Fortuny*, and Marianne Fritz's *The Weight of Things*. His first book, *The Aesthetics of Degradation*, was published in English in 2016 and is forthcoming in German and Dutch. His essays and criticism have appeared in the *New York Review of Books*, *Times Literary Supplement*, and many other journals in print and online. In 2022 he has been awarded the [Arts and Letters Awards in Literature](#) for honouring exceptional accomplishment in any genre.



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Praise for *My Father's Diet*

«Adrian Nathan West's debut novel is slim, sad, comic and sharply observed... West's achievement, in this subtle and delightful book, is to have rendered failure in strikingly handsome terms.»

Christopher Shrimpton, *The Guardian*

«This debut offers an acute, painfully funny front-row view of a midlife crisis in action.»

Sam Sacks, *Wall Street Journal*

«Compact and stirring, [... *My Father's Diet*] showcases the recognizable confusion of a changing world.»

Patrick Nathan, *New York Times Book Review*

«Our narrator is a product of malls, low-status jobs and faded dreams, and West's wry, precise tone captures the monotony and inertia of his daily life. But what could have been a cruel satire is elevated by his empathy for his characters and an outlook that's compassionate rather than condescending.»

Alastair Mabbott, *The Herald*

«West's writing is acute and at times brilliant. His descriptions of bodies that have been transformed into objects of devotion, especially, are luminous and imaginative, often humorous too... [*My Father's Diet*] is a book of subtle wit and poignancy, the scope of which is far greater than its brief length would suggest.»

Lamorna Ash, *Literary Review*

«Tender, sardonic, and endearingly grotesque, this coming-of-age body horror makes easy work of the heavy lifting.»

Publishers Weekly

«West's dark, slim, emotionally precise debut novel is...consistently poised on a very narrow line between blackhearted contempt for these characters and comic mockery of them. But because he never slips off that line, he generates a certain affection for his characters, even if it's clear how that body-transformation scheme is going to go.»

Kirkus Reviews (starred review)

«Adrian Nathan West, one of our best translators, is also one of our best novelists. He gives such solemn care to such mundane American pap and crap even while denying any redemptive power to the effort and it's that denial – sorrowful, but without anger, without delusion – that constitutes his brilliance. *My Father's Diet* is among the most ruthlessly true chronicles of the culture – of the patrimony – that we, all of us, have ruined.»

Joshua Cohen