



River Bend Chronicle: The Junkification of a Boyhood Idyll amid the Curious Glory of Urban Iowa by **BEN MILLER**

ISBN: 978-0-9849000-0-8

March 12, 2013

\$17.95, paperback, French flaps

5½ x 7½, 472 pages

40 black-and-white photographs

by Robert Campagna

Distributed to the trade by John F. Blair,

1-800-222-9796, www.blairpub.com

Also available as e-Book

978-0-9849000-1-5

Lookout Books, a literary imprint housed in the Department of Creative Writing at UNC Wilmington, made history when its debut book, Edith Pearlman's story collection **Binocular Vision**, won the 2011 National Book Critics Circle Award and was named a finalist for the National Book Award, the Los Angeles Times Book Prize, and The Story Prize in the same year. The press aims to bring attention to works by emerging and historically underrepresented writers, as well as overlooked gems by established authors.

Lookout Books

Department of Creative Writing

UNC Wilmington

601 South College Road

Wilmington, North Carolina 28403

lookout.org

facebook.com/lookoutbooks

a haven for books that matter

“A crashingly intense immersion into the life of the unconventional Miller family; think David Sedaris times four.”

—Nancy Lord, Alaska Writer Laureate

“Few writers have given more compelling voice to their memories of a particular place. The Great American Midwest will never look—or feel—the same.”

—Jackson Lears, author of *Rebirth of a Nation*

“His imagination is astounding in its breadth and detail, but it is the heart behind the words, the emotion he brings to the smallest moments, that makes me such an admirer of this writer and his work.”

—Hannah Tinti, author of *The Good Thief*

FROM A STRIKING TALENT WITH KEEN POWERS OF OBSERVATION comes this evocation of an eccentric family's tangled connections—between themselves, an unlikely cast of locals, and a seldom-documented urban Iowa, one not of cows and cornstalks but of thrift stores, TV dinners, and bridges spanning the muddy sprawl of the Mississippi River.

By turns uplifting and harrowing, Ben Miller's prose portrays a boy's quest to make his life more than the sum of its worst moments in a chaotic household. The tableau revealed is endearingly adrift in time—an inventor's dream of selling America on a mail-order ice rink, the neighbors whose prodigious cookouts have the gravitas of Greek drama, and the aspiring misfit writers who meet to quote *The Elements of Style* over Pall Malls in a riverside tenement. Through it all, Miller returns to his Virgil, neighbor Mr. Hickey, a bow-tie-clad widower who exhibits a beguiling power to bear losses without himself becoming lost. Together the unlikely duo forms an irrevocable bond, sipping Sanka and 7UP while tuning in to Muhammad Ali's greatest matches or rooting for the beleaguered Cubs.

Miller has engulfed the reader in the saga of a family fragmenting, and in the plight of a city redefining its identity at the close of a century. As characters converge and alter each other, the narrative current sweeps us toward a reckoning with secrets guarded for far too long.

Ben Miller has published in *AGNI*, *Ecotone*, the *Kenyon Review*, the *Antioch Review*, *Salmagundi*, *One Story*, and other journals. His essays have been reprinted or noted six times in *Best American Essays*, and his awards include a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. He lives in New York City with his wife, the poet Anne Pierson Wiese.

ARCs to national reviewers and booksellers • National print campaign • Appearances in New York City, Boston, Iowa City, Richmond, tours of the Midwest and North Carolina • Book Web site RIVERBENDCHRONICLE.COM featuring expanded photo album, interactive map, and playlist • Reading Guide available at lookout.org • author blog • social media

For more information: Emily Smith, smithel@uncw.edu

