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Big-Eyed Afraid

By Erica Dawson

Waywiser Press. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Paperback. 104 pages. Dimensions: 7.5in. x 5.0in. x 0.5in. In *Big-Eyed Afraid*, a first book of genuine originality, Erica Dawson turns the mirror held up to nature on herself. Both humorous and heart-wrenching, Dawson balances formal adroitness with a 21st-century colloquial idiom modulating between demotic and mandarin registers, a voice all her own. Employing numerous forms, including the rondeau, ballade, rhyme royal and her own adaptation of the In Memoriam stanza, Dawson elevates the self only to see it combust into pieces of broken character, an arch of introspection signalled by the books opening and ending series of nickname poems, including Nappyhead, Mommy Dearest, and DrugFace, where contradictions of personal, cultural, and intellectual identities are exposed. In between, Dawson completes the case history, calling on everyone from Freud and Puccini to Rita Hayworth and James Brown while craftily moving between rhymes mellifluous voice and that of a frighteningly self-effacing honesty: . . . search high for your halo and penance And a murder of crows and your birthdays sentence. Yet for every stanza spent in Dawsons mind, each page of *Big-Eyed Afraid* opens up to face and find shade from realty's blue leaded sun burning...



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Reviews

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