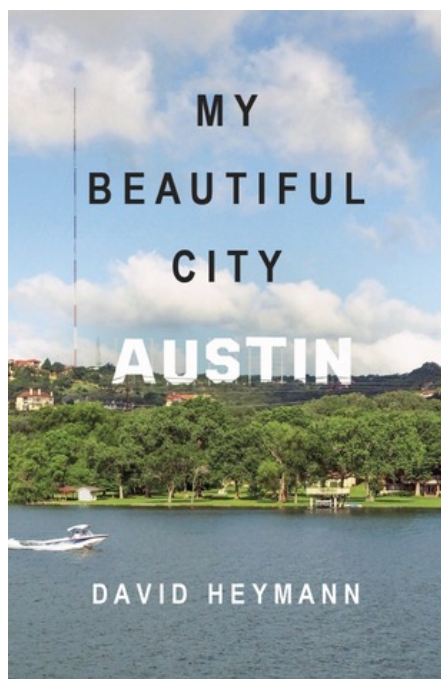




My Beautiful City - Austin

David Heymann

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In My Beautiful City Austin David Heymann crafts seven masterful tales of a young architect who fails again and again to dissuade his clients from their bad decisions. So the houses he designs aid and abet the ongoing erasure of Austin's ambrosial charm. These sharp, humorous stories explore consequences of Austin's rediscovered allure. Fueled by the dubious intentions of its inhabitants, this is a town growing madly while ignoring the pain of a thousand small cuts.

My Beautiful City - Austin Details

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Author : David Heymann

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From Reader Review My Beautiful City - Austin for online ebook

Soren says

I read this book because my library recommended it, but I didn't enjoy it that much. It was nice to read a book about my hometown, but there was just a lot of geographic and architectural details and no plot.

Timmytoothless says

Nice episodic view into the life of a young architect with an old soul in Austin, TX

Lisa says

This work of fiction stands out - in many places it reads like a page from real life in Austin. Its undertone is tragic as it describes how the architect compromises his sense of design, sense of ethics even, to accommodate careless clients. We can hope that this is not always true, but it has a bittersweet ring of truth to it that makes the short stories compelling nonetheless.

Hillary M. says

These stories were a special treat for me, because two things I particularly like are Austin and architecture, for separate reasons. In this collection of stories, I got to experience them both.

David Heymann builds words and paragraphs as beautifully as I imagine his architecture is-- just as intuitive and interesting. I was thoroughly immersed in the Austin way of life, and enjoyed his perspectives and observations that led me to do even more side research, looking up statues and house patterns and locations mentioned in the book. The stories are all separate adventures, but all flow together to create one consciousness of the author, making each story like a chapter of his life. All together, we see a portrait of he himself start to form, in all of his concerns, worries, shocks, laughs and good times, and dealing with people who had a sense of what they were doing-- as well as people who were doing what they wanted, sense be damned.

It was really great to read, and I truly enjoyed it!

I recommend it to anyone who likes Austin, or architecture, or funny true life stories about strange people wanting strange things.

I got this book for free from Good Reads first reads.

Michelle Lancaster says

Fiction

David Heymann

My Beautiful City Austin
Houston: John M. Hardy Publishing
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176 pages, \$24.00
November 2014

The seven linked stories in architect and University of Texas professor David Heymann's collection of short fiction are a testimonial to his passion for Austin and, hopefully, function as a warning. We flock to gorgeous, temperate Austin and that laid back hippie-techie-arty-nerdy-hipster-music-dude-everything-is-cool-or-soon-will-be vibe. But we refuse to respect what we love and destroy the qualities we claim to value. Suburban sprawl, disregard of ethical architecture and environmental considerations, and what Heymann calls "steroidal houses, huge and tall and...pretentious...starter mansions..." are endangering our beautiful city.

Heymann's protagonist is also an architect named David. He is funny, earnest, and frequently befuddled by his clients. In "Intern Owners" he is flummoxed when his clients choose a neighborhood and house plan that are starkly different from their personalities and values. In "The Honey Trap" his older, retired clients want to build the personal equivalent of Six Flags as a lure for their grandchildren. "A Life in Ruins" finds David on a house tour suffering cognitive dissonance occasioned by a Shaker style master bedroom in a "vaguely Italianate stucco and stone pile." "Patterns of Passive Aggression" contrasts Barton Springs—"the psychic heart of Austin"—and Lake Travis.

The author can turn a phrase: "Facts, politics, money: the [Barton] Springs are gradually being strangled, as one landscape takes over another, like starlings, or hydrilla, or antibiotic-resistant strep..." Regarding a certain familiar collection of restaurants: "There are a series of barbeque joints positioned like Stations of the Cross in a ring of towns around Austin." A subdivision with a mixture of overgrown houses from widely divergent eras and styles looks like "someone had given a group of supersized drag queens the keys to the wardrobe of a historical society."

And his descriptive skills are pastoral without being effusive. "The rolling reddish ground everywhere was covered in a ridiculousness of bluebonnets, to the edge of the horizon....A bit farther on we came upon a cowboy, fully duded out and saddled up, coming toward us through scrub cedar and cactus, riding herd on a flock of tiny Angora sheep, the legs of which disappeared into the purple blue."

Heymann's book is about the role architecture can and should play in our quality of life. He would rather we built innovative structures that incorporate the character of, and partner with, the land on which we choose to live. *My Beautiful City Austin* is a love song. It remains to be seen whether that song is a rallying seduction or a bittersweet elegy.

First published in Lone Star Literary Life.

Kate says

"Yosemite Sam, exposed breasts, that dreamy telescoping creek: heroes all."

"Architecture is a conduit to the real."

"When I got to the site, Duane was taking a break, standing on the running board of the open cab of his

severely beaten pickup, his shirt off, with a small square portable electric fan, rigged to the cigarette lighter on the dash, stuffed into the waistband of his pants, his twine belt dangling to his knees."

"For me, a lot of Austin is bound up in the possibilities that vision affords."

Dino Price says

I laughed a lung out. I had flashed backs of Joseph Heller's "Catch 22" and the hero Capt Yossarian trying to make sense of the Second World War.

There were trying moments of heart ache stolen from rollicking audacious humor.
