

Praise for Tony Medina's *My Old Man Was Always on the Lam*



My Old Man Was Always on the Lam contains powerful, moving, compassionate poems that spring out of the life of Harlem apartments and streets. It contains deeply felt, evocative poems of loss and mourning. In an era when too much work produced depends totally on the polished surface provided by the use of brilliant language, Tony Medina risks everything with his willingness to tear away the surface skin of relationships and life, to journey to that dark center where memorable poetry lives. *My Old Man Was Always on the Lam* is the work of a truly original and vibrant poet.

— **Maria Mazziotti Gillan**

Tony Medina infuses his signature wordplay with a heightened aesthetic urgency in these bare-boned, tender laments for his parents, extended family, and humanity, or lack thereof. The old folks/In front of/My father's/Building are/Buildings that/have been/Abandoned—these poems are sober brutal truths as pavement for a long ill-tempered sprint with death. And life.

— **Quraysh Ali Lansana**

Demonstrating a combination of traits that gives him a voice like no one else, Tony Medina's poems are funny, intense, and tragic, and sometimes make you laugh until you cry. There's a terrible beauty in this book, a sparse and haunting music that stays with you. These poems are brave, and true, and well worth returning to again and again.

— **Leslie Heywood**



Ghosts of the Horse

My father coaxes my mother to Chi-Town
The lure of easy money making salads
At a hotel. My mother can't turn it down
With a daughter to feed, a habit to rid

But my father is being a man, the kind
Who expects sex in exchange for dinner
My mother's changed, she's back in her right mind
My father tries to push the issue further

He can't manhandle and manipulate her
Like his pimp days using her to feed his fix
Those numbed memories come rushing back to her
Ghosts of the horse coursing through her veins for kicks

She leaves her suitcase and everything behind
She wishes she could take her life and rewind

TONY MEDINA, two-time winner of the Paterson Prize, was born in the South Bronx and raised in the Throgs Neck Housing Projects. He served in the United States Army and earned a BA in English at Baruch College, CUNY, on the G.I. Bill. He has taught at Long Island University's Brooklyn campus and Borough of Manhattan Community College, CUNY. The author of several books for adults and young readers, his poetry, fiction and essays appear in over forty anthologies. Medina, whose most recent book is *I and I, Bob Marley*, earned a MA and PhD in English from Binghamton University, SUNY, and is Associate Professor of Creative Writing at Howard University.

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