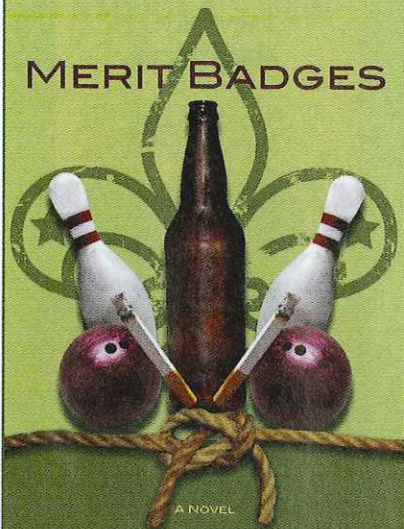


WINNER OF THE AWP AWARD FOR THE NOVEL

MERIT BADGES



A NOVEL

MERIT BADGES

a novel by

Kevin Fenton

Winner of the
AWP Award for the Novel
Selected by Jim Shepard

Top 10 Reasons You Should Read
Merit Badges:

1. Junior high is funny when it happens to someone else.
2. You were a Boy Scout.
3. Owning the book might make people think you were a Boy Scout.
4. *Lost* is no longer on television.
5. Minnisapa, Minnesota might be a lot like your hometown.
6. You like lists.
7. Your adolescence lasted twenty years, too.
8. There aren't any vampires.
9. It has that 'new-book' smell.
10. Because if you don't, you're a dube.

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SPECIAL SECTION // INSPIRATION

Gary
Jackson
*Missing You,
Metropolis*

AGE: 29. **RESIDENCE:** Dallas.
GRADUATE DEGREE: MFA from the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. **JOB:** Teacher.
AWARD: 2009 Cave Canem Poetry Prize, selected by Yusef Komunyakaa.
PUBLISHER: Graywolf Press.

TIME SPENT WRITING THE BOOK: "There are a few poems in the book that I started back in 2003. But the bulk of the poems were written within about four years on average."

NUMBER OF CONTESTS ENTERED: Three.

SAMPLE: "I saw the bastard webslinging over electric Soho, / miles above the stoplights and New Yorkers." ("Upon Seeing Spider-Man on My Way to Work")

SOURCE OF INSPIRATION: "I think *Missing You, Metropolis* is my ode to comic

books and loss. I grew up reading comic books and I fell completely in love with them. I don't know any other way to say this. I've since stopped buying comics—though I still read the ones I own and occasionally will snap up a trade paperback or graphic novel—but, considering all the things we lose during our lives, I'm amazed I held on to comics as long as I did. It's a thread that kind of pulls through my entire life. Of course, these are all things I can say now



that I'm looking back over the collection. At the time of writing most of those poems, I think I was just trying to convey something about myself through my obsessions."

ADVICE: "This entire experience has taught me that if you think the work you're doing is good, you have to get it out there, everywhere, because you never know who will bite. All it takes is one acceptance and you're on your way."

