



The Book of Duels

Michael Garriga

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Fierce, searing, and darkly comical, Garriga's debut collection of short-short fiction depicts historical and imagined duels, re-envisioning in a flash the competing points of motivation—courage and cowardice, honor and vengeance—that lead individuals to risk it all.

In this compact collection, “settling the score” provides a fascinating apparatus for exploring foundational civilizing ideas. Notions of courage, cowardice, and revenge course through Michael Garriga’s flash fiction pieces, each one of which captures a duel’s decisive moment from three distinct perspectives: opposing accounts from the individual duelists, followed by the third account of a witness. In razor-honed language, the voices of the duelists take center stage, training a spotlight on the litany of misguided beliefs and perceptions that lead individuals into such conflicts.

From Cain and Abel to Andrew Jackson and Charles Dickenson; from John Henry and the steam drill to an alcoholic fighting the bottle: the cumulative effect of these powerful pieces is a probing and disconcerting look at humankind’s long-held notions of pride, honor, vengeance, and satisfaction. Meticulously crafted by Garriga, and with stunning illustrations by Tynan Kerr, *The Book of Duels* is a unique and remarkable debut.

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