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50 American Plays (Poems)

Michael Dickman, Matthew Dickman

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"Their verse . . . is strikingly different. Michael's poems are interior, fragmentary, and austere, often stripped down to single-word lines; they seethe with incipient violence. Matthew's are effusive, ecstatic, and all-embracing, spilling over with pop-cultural references and exuberant carnality." —*The New Yorker*

Identical twins Michael and Matthew Dickman once invented their own language. Now they have invented an exhilarating book of poem-plays about the fifty states. Pointed, comic, and surreal, these one-page vignettes feature unusual staging and an eclectic cast of characters—landforms, lobsters, and historical figures including Duke Ellington, Sacajawea, Judy Garland, and Kenneth Koch, the avant-garde spirit informing this book introduced by playwright John Guare.

"Lucky in Kansas"

Judy Garland: This is always the worst part
Tin Man: The coming back
Judy Garland: Yes, it fucking sucks, it's depressing as shit
The Lion: Well, we're lucky to still be employed at this farm
Straw Man: I wouldn't call it lucky
The Lion: We were lucky to get back
Straw Man: That's not really lucky either I don't think you know what lucky means
Judy Garland: It's funny what you miss
Tin Man: The running
Judy Garland: The flying
Tin Man: The flying monkeys
Judy Garland: The beautiful flying monkeys above the endless emeralds the unbelievably green world

Michael Dickman and **Matthew Dickman** are identical twins who were born and raised in Portland, Oregon. Michael received the 2010 James Laughlin Award for his second collection *Flies* (Copper Canyon Press, 2011). Matthew won the prestigious APR/Honickman Award for his debut volume, *All-American Poem*.

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