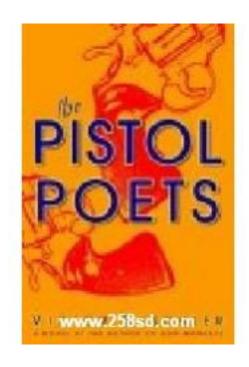
The Pistol Poets



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From Publishers Weekly With this madcap sophomore outing, after 2001's Edgar-nominated Gun Monkeys, Gischler challenges Kinky Friedman for top slot in the zany noir subgenre of mystery fiction-and for sheer mayhem and body count momentum, Gischler may triumph. Itinerant poetry teacher Jay Morgan is one semester into a short-term contract as a visiting professor at Eastern Oklahoma University when he wakes up with that time-honored mystery cliche, a dead girl in his bed. Before he can react-before, actually, he realizes she's dead-he's called into the office of the dean and handed the unenviable assignment of editing the poetry of crusty old Fred Jones, a major donor to the campus literary magazine. For Morgan, who loathes amateur poets, this is pretty bad news. Jones is just as dismayed with his new editor's appearance ("Is this guy on the dope? Don't saddle me with no

dopehead"). But Jones has surprising skills: he quickly takes care of Morgan's corpse problem and, you guessed it, he turns out to be one hell of a poet. Besides the dead girl, there are a number of other comic plot threads: a street thug with a bag of stolen dope assumes the identity of one of his victims and attends the university as a poetry graduate student; an undergrad reporter writing a story on Morgan quickly drags him into bed; and the bad guy owner of the stolen dope rolls into town bent on revenge. Gischler deftly weaves together these elements and more and comes up with plenty of laughs (and an equal number of groaners), all imbedded within a small war's worth of bullets and blood. This is a far-fetched but fast and viciously enjoyable read.Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist In his acknowledgments, Gischler reassures his colleagues at Rogers State University that the oddball characters who populate his fictional Eastern Oklahoma University are not based on them. Considering the drunks, dopers, phonies, and weirdos he portrays, Rogers State personnel will be happy to believe him. This offbeat, implausible, black-humored, thoroughly enjoyable tale concerns visiting professor Jay Morgan and drug lord Harold Jenks, who is posing as a poetry grad student. Morgan, who has no qualms about sleeping with students, finds one dead in his bed. When Ginny, another student, witnesses Morgan's cover-up of the crime, she is happy to keep quiet--as long as she can be Morgan's new bedmate. A strange old man helps Morgan bury the dead girl and promises to help him--providing Morgan evaluates his poetry. Meanwhile, poseur Jenks finds himself one of Morgan's students. With all its goofiness, the story manages to generate a surprising level of suspense, as bad guys come after Morgan and Jenks. Slightly over the top, perhaps, but an utterly entertaining foray into a very bent version of academia. Jenny McLarinCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved See all Editorial Reviews

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