

The Quickenning Maze

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Based on real events in Epping Forest on the edge of London around 1840, The Quickenning Maze centres on the first incarceration of the great nature poet John Clare. After years struggling with alcohol, critical neglect and depression, Clare finds himself in High Beach Private Asylum – an institution run on reformist principles which would later become known as occupational therapy. At the same time another poet, the young Alfred Tennyson, moves nearby and becomes entangled in the life and catastrophic schemes of the asylum's owner, the peculiar, charismatic Dr Matthew Allen.

For John Clare, a man who had grown up steeped in the freedoms and exhilarations of nature, who thought ‘the edge of the world was a day’s walk away’, a locked door is a kind of death. This intensely lyrical novel describes his vertiginous fall, through hallucinatory episodes of insanity and dissolving identity, towards his final madness.

Historically accurate, but brilliantly imagined, the closed world of High Beach and its various inmates – the doctor, his lonely daughter in love with Tennyson, the brutish staff and John Clare himself – are brought vividly to life. Outside the walls is Nature, and Clare’s paradise: the birds and animals, the gypsies living in the forest; his dream of home, of redemption, of escape. Rapturous yet precise, exquisitely written, rich in character and detail, this is a remarkable and deeply affecting book: a visionary novel which contains a world.-- From the Trade Paperback edition.

作者介绍:

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