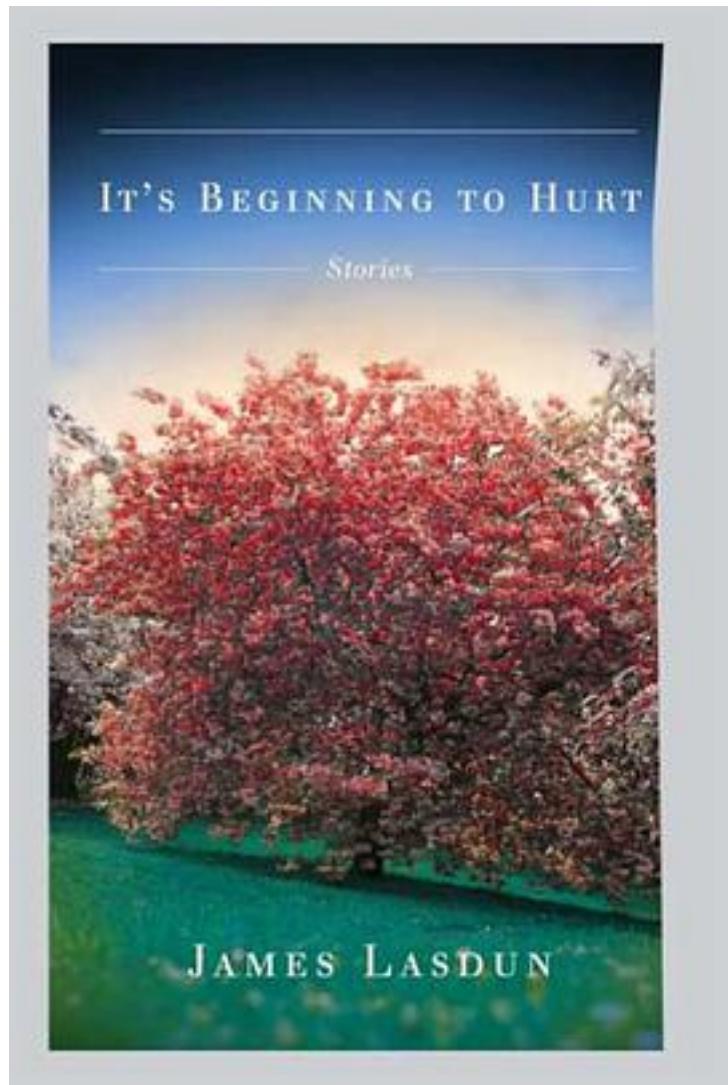


It's Beginning to Hurt



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著者:Lasdun, James

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The stories in this remarkable collection--including "An Anxious Man," winner of the National Short Story Prize (UK)--are vibrant and gripping. James Lasdun's great gift is his unfailing psychological instinct for the vertiginous moments when the essence of a life discloses itself. With forensic skill he exposes his characters' hidden desires and fears, drawing back the folds of their familiar self-delusions, their images of themselves, their habits and routines, to reveal their interior lives with brilliant clarity. In sharply evoked settings that range from the wilds of Northern Greece to the beaches of Cape Cod, these intensely dramatic tales chart the metamorphoses of their characters as they fall prey to the full range of human passions. They rise to unexpected heights of decency or stumble into comic or tragic folly. They throw themselves open to lust, longing, and paranoia--always recognizably mirrors of our own conflicted selves. As James Wood has written, "James Lasdun seems to be one of the secret gardens of English writing . . . When we read him we know what language is for again." This collection of haunting, richly humane pieces is further proof of the powers of an enormously inventive writer. James Lasdun has published two previous collections of stories, three books of poetry, and two novels, including "The Horned Man," which was a "New York Times" Notable Book. He was born in London and now lives in upstate New York. The stories in this collection--including "An Anxious Man," winner of the National Short Story Prize (UK)--are vibrant and gripping. James Lasdun's great gift is his unfailing psychological instinct for the vertiginous moments when the essence of a life discloses itself. With forensic skill he exposes his characters' hidden desires and fears, drawing back the folds of their familiar self-delusions, their images of themselves, their habits and routines, to reveal their interior lives with brilliant clarity. In sharply evoked settings that range from the wilds of Northern Greece to the beaches of Cape Cod, these dramatic tales chart the metamorphoses of their characters as they fall prey to the full range of human passions. They rise to unexpected heights of decency or stumble into comic or tragic folly. They throw themselves open to lust, longing, and paranoia--always recognizably mirrors of our own conflicted selves. As James Wood has written, "James Lasdun seems to be one of the secret gardens of English writing . . . When we read him we know what language is for again." "Lasdun's novels succeed as efficient entertainments, narrowly focused, linguistically dextrous, coolly presenting their characters' foibles . . . His short stories relinquish none of this gamesmanship, yet they seem to expand where the novels contract . . . Their characters have a complexity and confusion that override the unfolding plot. And the narratives seem opened up to the entire history of fiction . . . Touching and revelatory . . . Devastating."--Mark Kamine, "The Times Literary Supplement" "Reading Lasdun is like reading a sly collaboration between Kafka and Updike: elegant, acutely observed and utterly unflinching . . . This is a collection that examines the most inward mechanisms of rage, fear and desire with astonishing skill and strangely lyric power."--John Burnside, "The Times" (London) "Lasdun has a Nabokovian eye. Few exponents of the short form offer such tempting, disturbing pleasures . . . "It's Beginning to Hurt" is . . . a superlative collection, exhibiting all of Lasdun's familiar talents and a few new ones into the bargain."--Richard T. Kelly, "Financial Times" "A gem . . . James Lasdun writes the best sort of English prose."--Colin Greenland, "The Guardian" "A story master."--Tim Adams, "The Observer" (London) "Lasdun] creates] a world of objects and feelings that are rich, recognisable and yet elusive . . . His prose here] is marked by a fine, thoughtful, humane exactness . . . Lasdun uses his dramatic skill to show the most subtle and delicate movements between poles of feeling."--Tom Deveson, "The Sunday Times" (London) "There is much to admire in Lasdun's stories, not least the astonishing beauty and precision of his imagery. In a few perfectly chosen words, Lasdun can distill a character's essence and bring him to life."--David Bezmogzis, author of "Natasha" "Stellar collection combines a sharp eye for detail, subtle character development and virtuosic command of narrative voice. A British native who now lives in upstate New York, Lasdun also writes poetry, novels and screenplays, but his fourth volume of stories suggests that his

strength lies in the short form. The title piece is the shortest, less than two-and-a-half pages, and functions as the prose equivalent of haiku in its evocation of an affair, a death and a marriage that is all but dead. Yet that same title could apply to practically every one of these stories, which often detail a pivotal point at which a man (usually) comes to terms with his essential character and discovers something hurtful or troubling about himself. In 'An Anxious Man' (most of the titles are far more generic than the stories themselves), an inheritance disrupts a family's equilibrium, as the wife's attempts to play the stock market during an economic downturn make the husband fearful of everything, even as he questions his judgment. 'Was it possible to change?' asks the protagonist of 'The Natural Order,' a faithful husband whose trip with an incorrigible womanizer leaves him both appalled and envious. In 'Cleanness,' a widower's marriage to a much younger woman forces his son to confront his own indelible impurities. 'A Bourgeois Story' explores 'the peculiar economy of . . . conscience,' as an unexpected reunion of college friends, one of whom has become a well-to-do lawyer while the other has turned increasingly radical, leaves the former as uncomfortable with his own life as he is.

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