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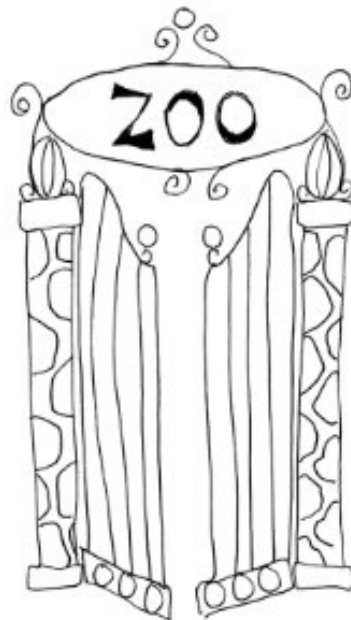
A Human Menagerie: Triumphs, Tragedies, and Cautionary Tales in Verse

Rob Kleinsteuber

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A Human Menagerie

**Triumphs, Tragedies, and Cautionary Tales
in Verse**



Written and Illustrated by Rob Kleinsteuber

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Rob Kleinsteuber : A Human Menagerie: Triumphs, Tragedies, and Cautionary Tales in Verse before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Human Menagerie: Triumphs, Tragedies, and Cautionary Tales in Verse:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Best contemporary poetry book in years By WAM This remarkable book of poetry is head and shoulders above any other poetry book I have read in years. The author's insight into human nature reminds me of Jonathan Swift, but with more compassion. The quality of the verse is well-nigh impeccable.

This is not the usual obscure navel-gazing that is so common in today's poetry. The book is a series of stories about characters we can all recognize, drawn with a few very well-chosen words, captured at their most intense and/or typical moment. The writer knows how to tell a story clearly, pointedly, and concisely. Kleinsteuber has a real mastery of many different poetic forms, and he knows how to manipulate them so they are fresh and delightful. He has a gift for wordplay which gives light and whimsy to even the darkest moments. I bet that you will find yourself laughing many times as you go through the book. There is a clever pen-and-ink drawing for every poem which captures its essential character. A friend summed it up well: "Shel Silverstein for adults." This book is unusual for contemporary poetry in that it has an arc, so I would recommend reading it in one sitting, with perhaps a glass of wine in hand. It reads comfortably in about an hour. I keep going back to my favorites almost daily. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An Invigorating Journey By running3dogs Include me among the nattering philistines who find modern poetry too abstract, elitist, and incomprehensible for the spare moments I might indulge in it. I know: my loss. Not surprisingly, decades have passed since I last read an entire volume of poetry. And yet only minutes seemed to elapse from the time I entered Rob Kleinsteuber's *Human Menagerie* and exited, feeling invigorated, satisfied, and certainly wiser for having taken the journey. Inside the gates, I encountered 25 characters, who, in ways tragic and triumphal, illuminate the eternal conflicts and unresolvable paradoxes of human nature. Here are pride and prejudice, wisdom and conceit, hunger and addiction, persistence and obsession--each on vivid display through Mr. Kleinsteuber's keen observations, whimsical wordplay, and spare but revealing pen-and-ink illustrations. As an added bonus, the author has included a CD of himself reading the poems, which brought out many nuances and rhythmic inflections that I had missed. Concrete, universal, and eminently accessible, *A Human Menagerie* engages the poetic soul within all of us. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent craftsmanship, authentic, cunningly written. By overpayerhater This book is well worth the money. The poems within are alive, edgy, emotive, and thought provoking. Few modern poets can convey a sense of meter, rhythm, and rhyme with such grace and agility. The content itself makes the reader think about our own internal and external dramas, and puzzle over experiences we have had which resemble one (or more!) of the subjects of the poems. Great poetry is so hard to find nowadays, but Mr. Kleinstuber has created a master work with this collection. DO YOURSELF A FAVOR- get it, and then read it cover to cover. The sequencing of poems is critical to understanding the work itself, and part of the inherent value and meaning of the work will be lost if the reader skips around. Easily 5 stars. ESPECIALLY with the audiobook. The narration of 'A Human Menagerie' is superlative, FINALLY with an author who can read poetry as well as write it. The flow of the narration is smooth, the cadence perfect, the inflection spot-on.

Walk through the gates of *A Human Menagerie* and begin a tour of humanity that is sometimes comic, sometimes sad, but always illuminating. The subjects and treatment are highly contemporary, but the human nature they describe is universal. You may recognize a neighbor, a co-worker, or even a little of yourself. The poems and illustrations in this collection are the result of many years of keen observation of "freckled human nature," to use Emily Dickinson's phrase. The author's eye is unblinking but his tone is often wry, and he is sympathetic to the characters he portrays. The essence of the poems - comic, ironic, and humane - is captured by illustrations that reflect a mastery and economy of line, in the tradition of Beardsley and Tenniel. The author demonstrates a remarkable mastery of versification, characterization, and good storytelling, often with an unexpected punch at the end. James Thurber, Ogden Nash, and Edward Gorey come to mind, but the author's voice and style are fresh and unique.