

THE PLAGUE FACTORY by John Edward Lawson

Reading & Resource Guide

Introduction

The Plague Factory contains 90 pages of John Edward Lawson's most experimental poetry. The Plague of experimental John poetry, pages contain the most Factory. A lyrical reconstruction of the human disease manufactured through our mass media. A lyrical human. A mass disease digitally diseased. ZZZZZZZZ.

About the Author

John Edward Lawson is an author, editor and poet living in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, DC. He is the author of ten books of fiction and poetry and seven chapbooks. Over 500 of his poems, stories, and articles have been published in magazines, anthologies, literary journals, and newspapers worldwide. John was a winner of the 2001 Fiction International Emerging Writers Competition; in addition to being a finalist for the Bram Stoker Award (2006, Superior Achievement in Poetry) and the Wonderland Award for Bizarro Fiction (2007, collected fiction), other award nominations include two for the Rhysling Award, two for the Dwarf Stars Award, and the Pushcart Prize.

John is also a founding editor of Raw Dog Screaming Press. He spent four years as editor-in-chief of *The Dream People* online literary journal of bizarro fiction and poetry. Other editorial projects include three print anthologies, four e-anthologies, and freelance work for such companies as National Lampoon and Double Dragon Publishing.

He has been involved in the production of numerous short films, including award winners *Party Girl* and *Uberman: An Experiment in Consciousness*. Director Jayson Densman has collaborated with John for years spawning a trilogy of PoVids derived from his poetry.

Things to Think about While Reading

After Lawson's initial poetry collection, *The Scars Are Complimentary*, he sought to segregate his various styles in separate collections. *The Plague Factory* was his next poetry release and deals primarily with experimental poetry. When you think of poetry do you think of traditional verse or the more experimental work presented here? Does experimental verse meet your definition of poetry?

Discussion Questions

Do the prose poems function as poetry, or do they feel more akin to flash fiction?

Why is "The Plague Factory" the title piece in this collection? Are illness and mass production/consumerism themes in this collection? If not, why not?

The "cut up" technique in which text from multiple sources is spliced together has been utilized in some of these poems. Which of these are in fact cut ups? Which are written to imitate disparate text sources?

Is there really any experiment to be found here, or are these works yet another example of form without function?

How are relationships portrayed in these poems, be it platonic, romantic, or one's relationship with their community?

Books/Films/ Media that Inspired the Author

Albert Camus
The Dream People literary journal
Danill Kharms
Søren Kierkegaard

Recommended Reading

Fence Literary Journal
Sante Sangre
Tales From the Vinegar Wasteland by Ray Fracalossy