

***An Infinity of Days in the Psychotic Atomik Empire***

Gregory Alan Norton

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Reviewed by Richard R. Blake for Reader Views (3/07)

This is a collection of Gregory Alan Norton's psychosocial short stories originally published in various literary magazines. The stories interlink a number of Chicago settings. His characters are a composite of college students, shop workers, telemarketers, supervisors, union organizers, and entrepreneurs.

A wide variety of everyday situations demonstrate the hopeless life cycle of drug addiction, child custody battles, welfare, and the threat of unemployment. Greg's unique brand of humor brings into play the immediate impulse to react, to resist authority when confronted with repeated indignities in the workplace.

Norton writes with subtle irony. I enjoyed the tongue in cheek humor found in the names with which he labels his villains. He writes with insight, understanding and pathos, expressing emotions on issues relating to injustice, authority, big business, union tactics, and political associations. His writing gives the perception that Greg is closely acquainted with the struggles of suburban, urban, and the inner city neighborhoods of the Chicago.

Fast moving dialogue carries the plot forward. A combination of different speech patterns, ethnic languages, dialects, and common street talk make the conversations colorful and forceful.

Gregory Alan Norton craftily cajoles and teases the reader with his devious imagination, portraying the battle of the psyche right up to his unique, unexpected, suspenseful, surprise, climatic endings. This is an exhilarating read.