



Christopher Higgs

As I Stand Living

#RECURRENT Series

Civil Coping Mechanisms

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In his radical memoir, *As I Stand Living*, Christopher Higgs uses the constraint based techniques William Faulkner employed for the construction of *As I Lay Dying* to create a deeply personal and philosophical portrait of the year he became a father. Blending elements of fantasy and confession, Higgs confronts parenthood by divulging his most intimate fears, secrets, sorrows, and hopes as a writer, husband, and teacher. A methodically composed and paradoxical blend of inextricably vulnerable emotion and objective fascination, *As I Stand Living* renders visible the tension between mediation and transparency when attempting to represent, capture, and convey a lived experience on the cusp of its future.

"Fuck understanding," Christopher Higgs writes in his yearlong project, "live in confusion." For Higgs, the self is not so much a mystery as an opinionated porosity. Things tumble into it—junk food, poetry, family, career, mass culture—while time is tracked by tiny rises (and on a bad day, dips) in the number of Higgs's Twitter followers. Though purposely artless, Higgs offers some stunning passages, such as an extended rant about his probable deaths, which makes the ground of reality tremble. Simultaneously superficial and profound—like all worthwhile books—*As I Stand Living* is a highly-relatable manifesto against relatability.

– DODIE BELLAMY, author of *When the Sick Rule the World* and *The TV Sutras*

As its title might suggest, Christopher Higgs's *As I Stand Living* takes a couple of cues from Faulkner, including the constraint under which it was written. But Higgs takes the narrative of this self-described "radical memoir" to some decidedly non-Faulknerian places, including ruminations on the LA Lakers' playoff chances, black metal, the role of experimental poetry in life, and the fantasy epics of Terry Goodkind. The big questions of life sneak up on you as you read it, from the role of art in life to the experience of parenthood. Out of the smallest details can come revelations.

– TOBIAS CARROLL, author of *Reel* and *Transitory*

In *As I Stand Living*, Christopher Higgs vitalizes the memoir with irreverent intelligence and savage emotion, an emotion that preys on insecurity as much as desire, truly human emotion—cerebral and untamed. This book is a gift of hope in a dreadful time, an equal distribution of sorrow and glee.

– LILY HOANG, author of *A Bestiary*

In this age of the total digital equalization of every conceivable register of human experience, *As I Stand Living* is exemplary: the Lakers' current standing in the playoff hunt is presented to the reader as no more or less worthy of authorial interest and documentation than a theorization of kitsch or a quick note about what the author had for dinner or updates on his academic job search. What is referred to as a "constraint" in reference to modeling the book's composition on Faulkner's method turns out to be truly liberating; with no plan, no map, no preconceptions, the book rushes headlong toward its own unknowable future. Along the way, Higgs dispenses with the pleasantries and strictures and familiar contrivances of narrative nonfiction for the sake of something true and honest and brazen: he allows the book to exist in its affirmative, differential, nomadic state—the state of pure becoming.

– EVAN LAVENDER-SMITH, author of *Avatar*