

Backsass: Poems

Fred Chappell

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This collection of humorous and satiric verse takes its title from that thoroughly southern term meaning irreverent retort, ironic remark, or scoffing observation. The ancient Roman poet Juvenal noted that his world made it hard not to write satire. Fred Chappell, finding his contemporary era analogous to that of imperial Rome, has in Backsass given in to the impulse for invective and mockery. The aim of satirists is to improve the moral tenor of society, and they approach this goal by first causing us to laugh at ourselves. Brandishing his lexical sword, Chappell ribs our shortcomings, offers tonic advice, and occasionally sheds a tear for our fallen ideals. Some poetry is fine wine. Backsass is the driest of martinis.



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