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The Financial Lives of the Poets

By Jess Walter



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The Financial Lives of the Poets is a comic and heartfelt novel from National Book Award nominee Jess Walter, author of *Citizen Vince* and *The Zero*, about how we get to the edge of ruin—and how we begin to make our way back. Walter tells the story of Matt Prior, who's losing his job, his wife, his house, and his mind—until, all of a sudden, he discovers a way that he might just possibly be able to save it all . . . and have a pretty damn great time doing it.



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The Financial Lives of the Poets By Jess Walter Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. National Book Award–finalist Walter does for the nation's bleak financial landscape what he did for 9/11 in *The Zero*: whip-smart satire with heart. Matt Prior quits his job as a business reporter to start Poetfolio.com, a Web site featuring poetry about finance, or money-lit. Unsurprisingly, it tanks, and Matt returns to the newspaper, only to be laid off with a meager severance package. Now not only are the Priors in danger of losing their house, but Matt is convinced that his wife, Lisa, is having an affair with an old boyfriend she rediscovered during her lengthy nightly Facebook sessions. With two sons in overpriced Catholic school and his increasingly senile father to support, Matt's bank accounts dwindle amid his financial planner's dire predictions (diagnosis: fiscal Ebola). When an appealing but illegal moneymaking opportunity presents itself, Matt jumps at the chance. The decision to include snippets of Matt's poetry in the novel was a risky one, but Walter pulls it off, never resorting to pretension or overused metaphors for life's meltdowns. (Oct.)

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Walter's wildly funny, heartrending novel is a clever meditation on the American Dream gone horribly wrong. Readers will be rooting for Matt, "a likable everyman" (*Christian Science Monitor*), even as he commits one painful error after another. Walter's writing crackles with energy, and though he seems to come close to treating some serious topics (drug use, infidelity, mental illness, and bankruptcy) superficially, his affection for his characters and his shrewd assessment of the Priors' financial and familial collapse circumvent that danger. His free-verse poetry, however, interspersed within the narrative, received mixed reviews. Praised as one of today's best new voices, Walter has penned a scathing indictment of contemporary America.

Review

"A deliciously antic tale of an American dream gone very sour...part noir gumshoe, part average Joe, [Matt Prior] is a sharp, wide-eyed, soulful observer, with a keen eye for the layers of bureaucracy and doublespeak." (Washington Post)

"Would be so sad if it weren't so funny, and so funny if it weren't so sad. . . . Compassionate, witty and drawn from today's heartless world, it's a terrific book." (Arizona Republic)

"An extremely funny novel...a very smart meditation on what's gone wrong with both the US economy and those of us who are expected to keep it running...cleverly designed and immensely entertaining." (Christian Science Monitor)

"The funniest way-we-live-now book of the year." (Time magazine)

"The novel has warmth, and its protagonist emerges as a bourgeois Everyman of the downturn." (The New Yorker)

"[Walter is a] deft humorist and catastrophist. . . . dangerously astute." (Janet Maslin, New York Times)

"Walter is one of my favorite young American writers. . . . [Financial Lives] made me laugh more than any other book published this year." (Nick Hornby, Parade)

“A real find....the ultimate something-for-everyone-don’t-skip-must-read.” (Sara Nelson, The Daily Beast)

“[A] superb farce.” (Maureen Corrigan, NPR's Fresh Air)

“Cynical yet warm, this novel about a financial reporter (with a failing website written entirely in blank verse) is a delight.” (The Must List, Entertainment Weekly)

“Walter’s *The Financial Lives of the Poets* is gasp out loud funny. It’s also sufficiently true to life that you’re grateful it’s not your life. Middle-class mayhem is just the best, at least in Walter’s hands.” (New York Daily News)

“Darkly funny, surprisingly tender . . . witheringly dead-on.” (Los Angeles Times)

“Jess Walter is a brilliant writer, one of the freshest new voices in American literature.” (Dallas Morning News)

“Matt Prior . . . is an Everyman for our parlous times.” (Seattle Times)

“A refreshing reminder that fiction remains a relevant, vital way to understand ourselves.” (The Oregonian (Portland))

“In this cautionary tale of fiscal follies and collapse Walter delivers a comic and gut-wrenching fable for these impecunious times.” (Kansas City Star)

“A comic masterpiece... packed [with] life and wry truth.” (Jeffrey Burke, Bloomberg News)

“Hilarious and timely...Walter grounds the story with moments of genuine feeling...bitter, funny and accurate...Jess Walter’s buoyant voice is a fresh pleasure.” (New West)

“America’s first Great Recession novel.” (Spokane Spokesman-Review)

“National Book Award-finalist Walter does for the nation’s bleak financial landscape what he did for 9-11 in *The Zero*: whip-smart satire with heart.” (Publishers Weekly (starred review))

“When it comes to explaining to me my own too often baffling nation, there’s no one writing today whom I trust as completely as Jess Walter. His intelligence and sympathy and great wit inform every page—indeed every sentence—of his terrific new novel, *The Financial Lives of the Poets*. ” (Richard Russo, author of *That Old Cape Magic* and *Empire Falls*)

“Jess Walter’s smart and big-hearted take on our bleak national moment is a welcome relief. *The Financial Lives of the Poets* is a rollicking fiction and an affecting family portrait, as well as a mordantly funny cautionary tale.” (Sam Lipsyte, author of *Home Land* and *Venus Drive*)

“Confirms Jess Walter as a writer of the first rank....his eye keen for the true values of the human heart. This is a hopped-up, raucous stunner of a novel with a hero who’s funny enough to make you weep for what we’ve lost.” (Whitney Terrell, author of *The King of Kings County* and *The Huntsman*)

“Jess Walter’s *The Financial Lives of the Poets* is a comic, graceful parable of marriage and money troubles in which a well-meaning family man makes decisions that are seriously stupid—and entertaining and

American.” (Sarah Vowell, author of Assassination Vacation and The Wordy Shipmates)

“One of the best American writers working today....It’s a testament to this author’s genius that I could not stop laughing even as he drives home some necessary truths. Walter has written a profound, and profoundly funny, book; this may well be the classic novel of our post-boom era.” (Ben Fountain, author of Brief Encounters with Che Guevara)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Terry Hayes:

Do you have favorite book? For those who have, what is your favorite's book? E-book is very important thing for us to find out everything in the world. Each e-book has different aim or perhaps goal; it means that e-book has different type. Some people experience enjoy to spend their time for you to read a book. They can be reading whatever they acquire because their hobby is actually reading a book. Why not the person who don't like examining a book? Sometime, man or woman feel need book if they found difficult problem or even exercise. Well, probably you'll have this The Financial Lives of the Poets.

Ira Knudsen:

Have you spare time for just a day? What do you do when you have more or little spare time? Yep, you can choose the suitable activity with regard to spend your time. Any person spent their very own spare time to take a walk, shopping, or went to the particular Mall. How about open or perhaps read a book entitled The Financial Lives of the Poets? Maybe it is for being best activity for you. You know beside you can spend your time together with your favorite's book, you can cleverer than before. Do you agree with their opinion or you have additional opinion?

Brian Griffith:

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Todd James:

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