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Townie: A Memoir

By Andre Dubus III

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**Won Book of the Year Adult Non-Fiction—2012 Indie Choice Awards
Amazon Best Book of the Month February 2011**

An acclaimed novelist reflects on his violent past and a lifestyle that threatened to destroy him—until he was saved by writing.

After their parents divorced in the 1970s, Andre Dubus III and his three siblings grew up with their exhausted working mother in a depressed Massachusetts mill town saturated with drugs and everyday violence. To protect himself and those he loved, Andre started pumping iron and learned to use his fists so well that he became the kind of man who could send others to the hospital with one punch, and did. Irresistibly drawn to stand up for the underdog, he was on a fast track to getting killed—or killing someone else.

Nearby, his father, an eminent author, taught on a college campus and took the kids out on Sundays. The clash of worlds between town and gown, between the hard drinking, drugging, and fighting of “townies” and the ambitions of well-fed students debating books and ideas, couldn’t have been more stark or more difficult for a son to communicate to a father. Only by finally putting pen to paper himself did young Andre come into his own, discovering the power of empathy in channeling the stories of others—and ultimately bridging the rift between his father and himself.

An unforgettable book, *Townie* is a riveting and profound meditation on physical violence and the failures and triumphs of love.

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Townie: A Memoir By Andre Dubus III Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Amazon Best Books of the Month, February 2011: Rarely has the process of becoming a writer seemed as organic and--dare I say it--moral as it does in Andre Dubus III's clear-eyed and compassionate memoir, *Townie*. You might think that following his father's trade would have been natural and even obvious for the son and namesake of Andre Dubus, one of the most admired short story writers of his time, but it was anything but. His father left when he was 10, and as his mother worked long hours to keep them fed, her four children mostly raised themselves, stumbling through house parties and street fights in their Massachusetts mill town, so cut off from the larger world that when someone mentioned "Manhattan" when Andre was in college he didn't know what they were talking about. What he did know, and what he recalls with detailed intensity, were the battles in bars and front yards, brutal to men and women alike, that first gave him discipline, as he built himself from a fearful kid into a first-punch, hair-trigger bruiser, and then empathy, as, miraculously, he pulled himself back from the violence that threatened to define him. And it was out of that empathy that, wanting to understand the stories of the victims of brutality as well as those whose pain drove them to dish it out, he began to write, reconciling with his father and eventually giving us novels like *House of Sand and Fog* and now this powerful and big-hearted memoir. --Tom Nissley

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Long before he became the highly acclaimed author of *House of Sand and Fog*, Dubus shuffled and punched his way through a childhood and youth full of dysfunction, desperation, and determination. Just after he turned 12, Dubus's family fell rapidly into shambles after his father--the prominent writer Andre Dubus--not only left his wife for a younger woman but also left the family in distressing poverty on the violent and drug-infested side of their Massachusetts mill town. For a few years, Dubus escaped into drugs, embracing the apathetic "no-way-out" attitude of his friends. After having his bike stolen, being slapped around by some of the town's bullies, and watching his brother and mother humiliated by some of the town's thugs, Dubus started lifting weights at home and boxing at the local gym. Modeling himself on the Walking Tall sheriff, Buford Pusser, Dubus paid back acts of physical violence with physical violence. Ultimately, he decided to take up his pen and write his way up from the bottom and into a new relationship with his father. In this gritty and gripping memoir, Dubus bares his soul in stunning and page-turning prose. (Feb.)

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review *Townie* is a resolute story about the forging of a writer in fire and blood and a wrenching journey through the wreckage of New England's lost factory world during the Vietnam War era. But Dubus wasn't born into poverty, rage, and violence. His father, an ex-marine officer turned celebrated writer and adored college professor, initially settled his first family in the bucolic countryside. But the marriage failed, "Pop" moved out, and the four kids and their overwhelmed mother plunged into impoverished small-town hell. Dubus, a target for bullies, and his equally complex and resilient siblings were hungry, neglected, and imperiled within a storm of druggy nihilism and bloodlust. Dubus survived by lifting weights and learning to fight, but his unbridled aggression, even on the side of good, exacted a spiritual toll. Although their charismatic father was oblivious to his children's suffering, he was not unloving, and when an accident left him confined to a wheelchair, their support was profound. Dubus chronicles each traumatic incident and realization in stabbing detail. So chiseled are his dramatic memories, his shocking yet redemptive memoir of self-transformation feels like testimony under oath as well as hard-hammered therapy, coalescing, ultimately, in a generous, penetrating, and cathartic dissection of misery and fury, creativity and forgiveness,

responsibility and compassion. --Donna Seaman

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Arthur West:

Book is written, printed, or outlined for everything. You can recognize everything you want by a guide. Book has a different type. We all know that that book is important matter to bring us around the world. Adjacent to that you can your reading skill was fluently. A publication Townie: A Memoir will make you to become smarter. You can feel considerably more confidence if you can know about every thing. But some of you think which open or reading a new book make you bored. It isn't make you fun. Why they could be thought like that? Have you trying to find best book or ideal book with you?

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