



# A Near-Perfect Gift (Michigan Literary Fiction Awards)

*Rose Marie Kinder*

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"[Kinder] writes with the x-ray vision of a Sherwood Anderson, and with the insight of a Freudian analyst, an interpreter of dreams, in language that could be as well suited to the traditional folktale or the hometown newspaper as to poetry of the French surrealists. Here is a collection of short fiction for our times: a mirror held up to the homely details, reflecting back to us the wild insides."

---Laura Kasischke, MLFA judge

"I read *A Near-Perfect Gift* from start to end without stopping, and, when I finished, found myself sitting in my darkened office, infused with an unexpected sense of peace."

---Eileen Pollack, MLFA judge

The stories in *A Near-Perfect Gift* revolve around the often hardscrabble small-town life in one rural village. Like any other community inhabited by the human race, it's a place where the banal and the improbable coalesce, a place with its share of common tragedies and uncommon madmen: some howl at the moon, while others turn out to be heroes. There are the two old ladies down the street who might be witches and must be exorcised, and the man who plucks chickens for a living. It is within the perimeter of this offbeat microcosm of the world that seemingly small questions---often the kind that children ask, arising from a child's imagined understanding of how the adult world works---assume an eerie portent: Was that a snake beneath the woodpile? Could a pregnant bat climb out of a hole in the ground? The answers never cease to surprise.

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