



# The Adventures of Form and Content: Essays

*Albert Goldbarth*

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**The Adventures of Form and Content: Essays** Albert Goldbarth

**An astounding work of doubles by Albert Goldbarth, “a dazzling virtuoso who can break your heart”  
(Joyce Carol Oates)**

Albert Goldbarth’s first book of essays in a decade, *The Adventures of Form and Content* is about the mysteries of dualities, the selves we all carry inside, the multiverses that we are. This collection takes its shape from the ACE Doubles format of the 1950s: turn this book one way, and read about the checkered history of those sci-fi and pulp fictions, or about the erotic poetry of Catullus and the gravelly songs of Springsteen, or about the high gods and the low-down blues, a city of the holy and of the sinful; turn this book the other way, and read about prehistoric cave artists and NASA astronauts, or about illness and health, or about the discovery of planets and the discovery of oneself inside an essay, or about soul ships and space ships, the dead and the living; or turn the book any way you want, and this book becomes an adventure of author and reader, form and content.

Goldbarth’s essays have pioneered and inspired new forms of nonfiction writing for thirty years. Robert Atwan, the series editor for *The Best American Essays*, praises his work by stating, “These essays are a whole new breed . . . Goldbarth has spliced strands of the old genre with a powerful new genre—and the results are miraculous.” *The Adventures of Form and Content* is a new, ingenious work of hilarity and humanity that reminds us of the capabilities and impossibilities of art.

## The Adventures of Form and Content: Essays Details

Date : Published January 3rd 2017 by Graywolf Press

ISBN : 9781555977610

Author : Albert Goldbarth

Format : Paperback 272 pages

Genre : Writing, Essays, Nonfiction, Language

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# From Reader Review The Adventures of Form and Content: Essays for online ebook

## James Murphy says

This is busy writing. There's a lot happening on every page. Like Goldbarth poems, these essays are sinuous and weave in several directions across multiple planes of thought until they come together at some point of wisdom you didn't know you were ready to receive but are glad you did. You could make a case for a Goldbarth essay being much like a Goldbarth poem. A different form, as he'd probably point out, but slightly different content, at least most of the time. This is the nature of his essays, each of them seeming to address how the form and content of his subjects rhyme and disagree. Some subjects have form but no content like the shape of a hand painted on the wall of a prehistoric cave in France. Or the drawing of a glove on one of the book's covers. One essay concerns an astronomer who studies heavens with content but no form. The essays consider the doubleness of everything. Such varied subjects as cave art, how John Keats and the astronomer Clyde Tombaugh were searching for the same thing, a single mother in the Midwest, and nicknames demonstrate his line of thought. This doubleness is first noticeable in the design of the book. Remember the old Ace paperbacks of science fiction novels published back-to-back in the 1950s and after? They were 2 novels bound together yin and yang style with one spine so that the book you hold in your hands has 2 front covers but no back. One half of Goldbarth's book has 3 essays, the other 4. I can't figure out a reason for this other than Goldbarth admired the old Ace Books format and designed his book to be that way to fit his essays about the nature of doubleness.

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## Carol Peters says

An agile mind, thinking about humanity & the world. A few bits about poets & poetry.

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## John says

Ruminations on how One becomes Two (and Many) and other philosophical topics, interfused with lots of wonderfully told stories: about John Keats and Clyde Tombaugh and the links between them, about dying colleagues and complicated marriages, about real or possibly fictional people whose "form" and "content" both influence what happens to them in their lives, the filthy poetry of Catullus, and other yarns. Oh, and the history of Ace Doubles (of which I have a considerable collection) and their connection with, of all people, the Beats. The author is a true wordsmith, his prose and thinking often funny, always lucid and readable.

And from his quoting of old legal records I learned a new word: "hamesucken" (old spelling: "hamsoken"), meaning being assaulted in one's own home---as in: "Richard Beynt, two times a juror, 'badly beat Thomas Clerk and did hamsoken upon him.'" [79]

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## Laura Giangrande says

I never received this book, therefore I can not give review.

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**Sean says**

Brilliant as usual

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**Robbie Maakestad says**

An amazing collection of lyric essays. The formal experimentation here is mind-blowing. As always, Goldbarth does not disappoint.

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**Mills College Library says**

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**GraceAnne says**

I loved this book very much indeed. It was like being at an oak table in a quiet bar, and chatting with a deeply intelligent friend about a lot of things we were interested in: the dichotomies in people; Ace Doubles; Bruce Springsteen lyrics; neighbors and office mates and their love lives; Catullus; Keats; cancer. It's all written down with a grace and wit that seems utterly effortless but I know better. Some essays made me smile and at least one brought me very close to tears. It is the sort of collection that makes you want to press it on all your friends so that they can love it, too.

I read this in paperback. Reading is hard for me sometimes, sometimes the tablet is all I can handle, but sometimes I need soft, cream-colored paper that can be held in my not-cooperative hands. This book was a gift.

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