



# PLAIN SIGHT

DAVID BERGMAN

## CONTACT

Christine Drawl  
Passager Books  
christine@passagerbooks.com  
www.passagerbooks.com

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Passager announces the publication of *Plain Sight*, a collection of poems by David Bergman, whom writer and critic Daniel Mark Epstein says is “a modern master of the narrative lyric.”

In *Plain Sight*, Bergman writes about love, aging parents, friendship and chronic illness with twists and turns, verbal brilliance and wit that constantly surprises the reader. Bergman has lived with Parkinson’s Disease for eight years and focuses on it in one section in the book. He says, “While I wouldn’t wish it on anyone, for me it has been a fascinating experience and taught me so much about my body and mind.”

Editor Kendra Kopelke said that Passager published this collection in part to bring more recognition to a distinguished poet who has not published a book of poems in 25 years. “Bergman is writing his most stunning poems while facing some serious physical difficulties. This book is a testament to the vitality and unlimited power of the imagination and creative spirit.”

Bergman is the author of three books of poetry, *Cracking the Code*, which won the George Elliston Poetry Prize, *Heroic Measures* and *The Fortunate Light*, as well as *The Poetry of Disturbance: The Discomforts of Post-War American Poetry*. He is also the editor of the book *Gaiety Transfigured: Gay Self-Representation in American Literature*. He was a professor at Towson University for 40 years.

Passager is a literary press dedicated to writers over 50. In its 33 years of publishing 76 journal issues and 33 books,

Passager has shared the work of more than 1,500 writers, many in their 80s and 90s and 100s. In doing so, this non-profit press has gained a reputation for longevity in a field in which few magazines and journals last more than a handful of years. With *Plain Sight*, Passager Books continues its tradition of bringing the compelling writing and the insight and wisdom of older writers to the public.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

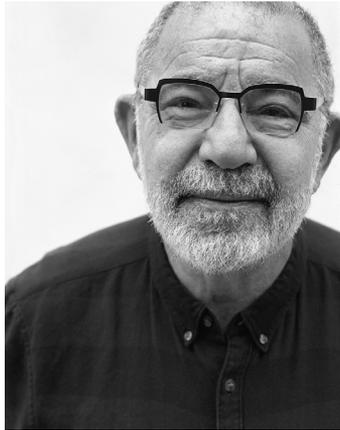


photo by Gioncarlo Valentine

David Bergman is the author or editor of over twenty books, among them three books of poetry, the latest, *Plain Sight* (Passager 2023). He is the winner of the George Elliston Prize and a Lambda Book Award. He is the author of the studies *The Poetry of Disturbance: The Discomforts of Post-War American Poetry* as well as *Gaiety Transfigured: Gay Self-Representation in American Literature*. His poetry has appeared in such journals as *The American Scholar*, *The Kenyon Review*, *The Paris Review*, *The New Republic*, and *The Yale Review*. Born in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, raised in New York City, he has lived in Baltimore since 1972. Eight years ago, he was diagnosed as having Parkinson's Disease. For over forty years he taught at Towson University. He has also written two whodunits awaiting publication.

## PRAISE

With hue these poems are laden and a wry wit, wistful as it is fragrant. With panache and a charm that's wise enough to avert wisdom. With rueful loves and bluesy affirmations, through illness and loss: the consummate pleasure in words' disarming hurt. In *Plain Sight* is the vigilant, aging poet, whose humor wipes away tears.

**CHARLES BERNSTEIN**

WINNER OF THE BOLLINGEN PRIZE

It seems incomprehensible that we have had to wait twenty-five years for another full-length collection from David Bergman. *Plain Sight* is a priceless, heart-catching Trojan Hoard of poetic invention. Mordant, elegiac, often hilarious, Bergman's voice combines the seemingly effortless plainsong of Whitman, Auden, and Marianne Boruch with the hard-won knowledge that Time erodes—and surprises—us all. To paraphrase the poet, these poems are acts of grace able to lift and move the world.

**JAMES MAGRUDER**

*VAMP UNTIL READY*

David Bergman is a post-modern master of the lyric narrative poem. An engaging storyteller whose narratives pulse with pathos, he navigates the crises of our lives with a gentle irony that avoids sentimentality. The range of his themes—love, death, progressive illness, art, and the conflict between sons and mothers—is supported by a striking command of metaphor and emotional tone.

**DANIEL MARK EPSTEIN**

*DAWN TO TWILIGHT: NEW AND SELECTED POEMS*

With these extraordinary poems, David Bergman makes himself more visible and discoverable, in spite of the difficulty, as his title poem proclaims, of the ordinary being seen at all.

I am stunned by the richness of his language—and envious. Plain Sight? His originality makes it complex and anything but plain, with a poet's bursts of metaphor and constant turning in surprising new directions.

**EDWARD FIELD**

*AFTER THE FALL*

## THE MAN WHO COULD NOT SMILE

The inability to smile was just one more  
symptom of a disease he'd learned

to live with over many years, a disease  
where muscles failed to take

direction from the brain,  
the orders lost in transit,

their stamps (forever) falling off  
before the letter had a chance to arrive.

It was not stroke. Strokes cause faces  
to twist and droop, split down the middle.

His countenance was of a piece, a mask  
signifying neither comedy nor tragedy

but symmetrically impassive and aloof.  
He had watched the changes come slowly—

his cheeks finding it harder and harder  
to rise to the occasion, the lips to bend

their crimson bow. His skin a curtain drawn  
before a dark proscenium.

He lost his subtler expressions early—  
the contemptuous smirk, the brief leer,

the flicker of bemusement.  
Then his pout unpuckered and finally,

the shit-eating grin had its full  
and was over-written and erased.

It was a matter of eyes. He hoped  
his conveyed still the excitement of living,

the new and surprising joy he felt  
as body slowly untied itself from spirit

and let him drift free  
through the currents of time.

He was told he had a poker face,  
but he refused to cash in on his disability.

Instead, he tried to tell the people he loved  
how much he loved them,

but it sounded, even in his ears,  
needy and desperate.

Yet it was love and joy that overwhelmed him now,  
emotions that demand to be shared

with those who stay and care about you.  
Someday he'd have to instruct them

like a mesmerist: *Look deep into my eyes.*  
*Have you ever seen such wonder!*

## ORDERING INFORMATION

*Plain Sight* by David Bergman

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Questions: [editors@passagerbooks.com](mailto:editors@passagerbooks.com)



Passager  
7401 Park Heights Ave.  
Baltimore, MD 21208  
[www.passagerbooks.com](http://www.passagerbooks.com)