READER GUIDE:

THE LAST WHITE HOUSE AT THE END OF THE ROW OF WHITE HOUSES

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Greetings, Readers!

To start, I want to thank you for reading *The Last White House at the End of the Row of White Houses*. I hope it sparks some lively conversation.

When discussing a book of poetry, I begin with zeroing in on which pieces were my favorite, and figuring out why. Is there a specific line that stuck with you? Was there an image that appeared more clearly than other in the book? How did the poem make you feel? Conversely, I like to return to the poems that didn't work for me, and figure out why. Was the poem confusing? How did the poem make you feel, or, did it make you feel anything at all? As a group, do you share any of the same favorites? Does your favorite appear on someone else's least-favorite list?

While piecing this book together, one of my main goals was to strike a balance between the narrative poems and the abstract, language-driven poems. Did this balance work for you, as a reader? Were you drawn toward a specific style of poem?

To me, many of the poems read like fables. I've included some of the typical characters you'd find in fables (wolves, sheep, horses), but I've also introduced the character of the robot. In his essay "The Fable as Literary Form," Isaac Singer writes "...the fable created its own philosophy: the character of a being is its fate. Though the wolf may speak sweetly, he remains a wolf with all his wolfish attitudes and appetites." What does this mean for the fate of the robot? If the wolf represents an aspect of cruelty in human nature, what could the robot represent?

If you read through the Notes section at the end of the book you'll notice that some of the poems borrow from other works. How do you feel about this kind of collaboration? Does the original author's voice come through in these new pieces? What concerns arise from this type of writing? What would happen if you used one of these pieces as a starting point for your own poem?

Thanks again for reading through this collection. Your attention is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely, Michael e. Casteels