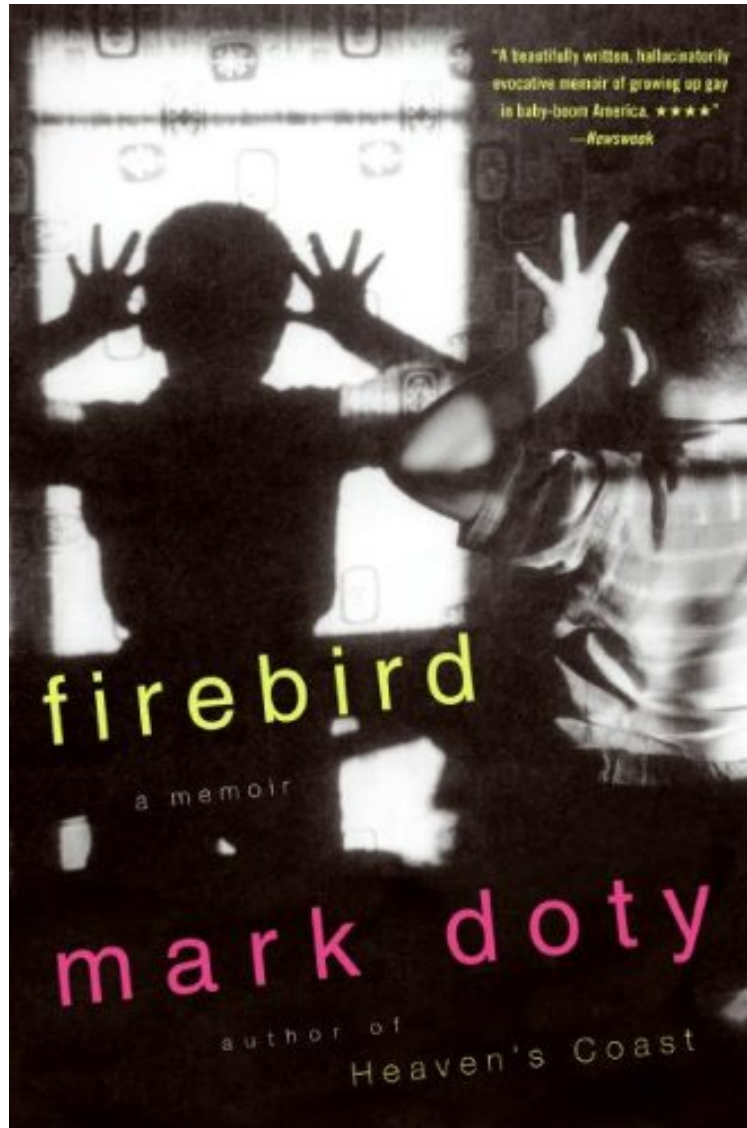


(Free read ebook) Firebird: A Memoir

## Firebird: A Memoir

Von Mark Doty

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**Von Mark Doty : Firebird: A Memoir** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Firebird: A Memoir:

Kundenrezensionen Hilfreichste Kundenrezensionen 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich.  
Charming, heartbreaking, honest... Von martha woodworth This is a beautiful memoir. I admit I was attracted to the cover: the author's picture was totally adorable. In fact, after reading the book I can honestly say he is one of the few writers I have ever really wanted to meet, because I felt as if I was reading the autobiography of a dear friend. My heart broke when I realized that his first foray away from home, to the big city of San Francisco, dropped off by his parents

on the highway, was at AGE FOURTEEN! I thought, what kind of parents would allow their child to go out into the world alone like that? I also felt sad when he realized, fully, that his parents didn't "see" him anymore, that he was something of a ghost in his home, being "allowed" to nest there. I had to laugh when his father said he could get a job at a casino if "the professor thing" didn't work out, and the man's non-sequitor conversations with his son. It reminded me of my father. When I was in my mid-thirties I told him I felt suicidal over a recent romantic loss. "Gee, the price of real estate is going up around here!" he exclaimed. I, too, am writing a memoir, so Mr. Doty's unusually poignant and open-hearted one was very helpful. He's a wonderful storyteller. Thanks to the author. e-mail: [femmessage@earthlink.net](mailto:femmessage@earthlink.net) if he's ever going to be in Santa Fe.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. an outsiders baedeker Von Ein Kunde To the ostracized, Mark Doty's "Firebird" is testament. To insiders, the frank and moving memoir of growing up gay in '50-'60's America, is a lens into which a casual gaze will stun. Looking deeper, few readers will come away from "Firebird" without recognizing themselves. Fewer still will leave Doty's life story without empathy. This is the book's chief victory; while the memoir may be a personal account of a young gay man's salvation, it is a story few would find utterly foreign. Self-discovery, after all, is solitary and often pits the inner polliwog against the larger, and often shifting, societal/peer context. The gay boy; the geek; the punk with the Mohawk; the girl with the braces all belong to the same childhood tribe. En masse, outsiders separate themselves through the discovery of what, ultimately, comforts them and affords them a place in this world-and where they find others just like them. Our young "Firebird" misfit finds beauty, a place to belong, within art. First he comes to love dancing and music; later he finds solace in painting and finally, poetry (on the urging of poet Richard Shelton to whom we poetry-lovers owe a huge debt of gratitude). Through it all, the emerging Doty, the evolving gay boy, is most at home in art, not in the rule-bound world of little boys. "Most boys...who seem already possessed of forms of knowledge opaque to me, things they grasp...I do not." When Mark's mother finds him performing playful drag for a friend, "She says, with a hiss, with shame and with exasperation, Son, you're a boy." No, he is a "queer" boy-"simultaneously debased and elevated." By Doty's own definition, "inside the rejected boy, inside the unloved body, reigns the sissy triumphant, enraged, jeweled by an elegant crown of his own devising." "Firebird," opens and closes focusing on this devising, this art and how the humanities, while on the surface may manifest itself as the serenity of stilled water, dazzles and confounds the soul and marrow in the murky depths below mere appearance. The opening work of art introduced to readers (and I don't want to give it away) is a clever piece of happenstance only a poet could mine to illustrate the book's theme. While Doty says much about himself and his salvation by art, it is when art is thrust in face of recrimination that it is most potent. "The Firebird, in fact, is used to (it), and doesn't care about the difficulty of circumstance; if anything it burns brighter in a gloomy wood. Go ahead...do what you will, I'll find the music in it." I'm beautiful, dammit! Young Mark needed to find the music in his own being. Life in the Doty household was anything but pedestrian; it was full of alcoholism; self-loathing; strained relations; and the proverbial generation gap, among other human frailties. Although I found at times his regaling of familial woe to be a tad tiresome (which might say more about me than the author), readers find the dolor is followed by incredible, inconceivable moments. The banal often served as the calm before the storm. Doty's sexuality and his sister's proclivity for the wild life, both proved to be touchstones of extreme prejudice to which neither would find solace from their parents. In "Firebird," the motherly succor is poison and the fatherly guidance is doled out in dollar bills and insouciance. Readers will discover this negligence and bias nearly ends the memoirist's life. For every gay man this book should become a Baedeker; for every straight person it should be required reading. Doty, mostly known for his searingly-beautiful and evocative poetry ("Sweet Machine" being his best), has written a memoir that is startling in its revelations and oddly moving in its reportage. It differs from his previous memoir, "Heaven's Coast," in its introspection. While "Heaven's Coast" (on the death of partner, Wally) has immediacy and intimacy, "Firebird" is more assessing and inclusive. "Firebird" is raw, exquisite and prosaic in the equal proportions mirroring the natural rhythm of family life, of growing up and inward. It is a sand papering off the layers of familial varnish; it is the story of how art saved a little, sissy boy residing in a house of dysfunction, in a world not always ready for the outsider. It is a story of us all rising from our individual pyres of prejudice and to what we owe the power of flight.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. succinct, intriguing Von Michael P. McCullough This is an interesting and succinct memoir of an unusual childhood. When I saw it at the library I thought, "Oh, Okay . . . another book about some writer's childhood." But I grabbed it anyway thinking that it might be fun reading a sort of autobiography of a person with whom I am totally unfamiliar. I ended up enjoying it. Doty is only a little older than me - but his childhood was amazingly different than mine. Sometimes it was hilarious - like the description of his mild contempt for his fellow dance school student. Or his getting caught dressed in drag practicing show tunes in his room. At other times it was terribly sad and pathetic - his mother's end, for example. Parts of it left me a little astonished - "Huh? His parents dropped him off on the highway so he could hitch to San Francisco at age fourteen?" After reading his intriguing childhood memoir I will certainly be reading some of Doty's poetry.

Kurzbeschreibung In *Firebird*, Mark Doty tells the story of a ten-year-old in a top hat, cane, and red chiffon scarf, interrupted while belting out Judy Garland's "Get Happy" by his alarmed mother at the bedroom door, exclaiming, "Son, you're a boy!" *Firebird* presents us with a heroic little boy who has quite enough worries without discovering that his dawning sexuality is the Wrong One. A self-confessed "chubby smart bookish sissy with glasses and a Southern accent," Doty grew up on the move, the family following his father's engineering work across America—from Tennessee to Arizona, Florida to California. A lyrical, heartbreaking comedy of one family's dissolution through the corrosive powers of alcohol, sorrow, and thwarted desire, *Firebird* is also a wry evocation of childhood's pleasures and terrors, a comic tour of American suburban life, and a testament to the transformative power of art. "Childhood's work is to see what lies beneath," Mark Doty writes in his memoir, *Firebird*. And adulthood's work, he suggests, is to make sense of what the child-self once saw. Doty, a poet, does this remarkably well, capturing the peculiar talismans of youth—"little cars of fragrant plastic whose wheels turn on wire axles that can be popped loose and examined; hard candies; sweet, chalky wafers strung together into wristlets and necklaces"—as well as a child's experience of sin: I am standing paralyzed by what I've done, there's a rush and roar from the direction of the living room, my father rising from the couch, he's coming down the hall, I'm afraid he's going to spank me, I remember the last time, the humiliation of it, him pulling my pants down on the porch and whaling me, his red face filled up with blood and rage, striking at me because what have I done? Now I've done something plain and sharply lit like the big shards of glass on the floor... It's clear from the start that the author's home life was not happy. His father's job with the Army Corps of Engineers kept the family crisscrossing the country; his older sister got pregnant at 17—"these girls knew what they were doing, these girls married to get out"—and ended up, eventually, in prison; and his mother, a frustrated artist, sank eventually into depression and alcoholism. As if growing up in this family during the 1950s and '60s weren't difficult enough, Doty's homosexuality provided additional anguish. A confrontation over his long hair led to a humiliating scene at a barbershop where Doty's father had dragged him and ended up with his attempted suicide at the age of 14. There are plenty more heart-wrenching episodes like this, and at times you might wonder why you'd want to put yourself through the ordeal of reading about them. Doty himself seems aware of this. "Why tell a story like this, who wants to read it?" he demands near the end of the book, then responds, "Even sad stories are company. And perhaps that's why you might read such a chronicle, to look into a companionable darkness that isn't yours." That may be one reason for reading *Firebird*; the other, undoubtedly, is Mark Doty's precise and lyrical prose, his acute perception, and his compassionate heart. --Alix Wilber *Pressestimmen* "By the end of Mark Doty's exquisite memoir, "*Firebird*," you'll have trouble believing you haven't read a brilliantly plotted novel by a master of fiction. But no made-up story could ever be as gripping as the one Doty tells, and few novelists could tell it this well."-- "*San Francisco Chronicle*" "Supple powerful reading . . . Doty immerses his readers in a gay coming-of-age complicated family meltdown." -- "*New York Times Book*" "A beautifully written, hallucinatorily evocative memoir of growing up gay in baby-boom America."-- "*Newsweek*" "Doty writes with the characteristic Zen calm you find also in his gorgeous poetry."-- "*Los Angeles Times Book*" "A lyrical, heartfelt, and ultimately haunting account of his early years."-- "*Washington Post Book*" "His luminous portrait of the artist as a young man also illuminates the currents of his times, and contains a haunting family history."-- "*Booklist*" (starred review) "An American classic.... Doty's writing surpasses anything he's ever attempted before and achieves a depth and a clear-eyed splendor that left me bereft and exalted at the same time."-- "*Salon*" "By turns lyrically comic and deeply sad."-- "*Out*" *magazine* "Incandescent.... A lasting work of art."-- "*Time Out*"