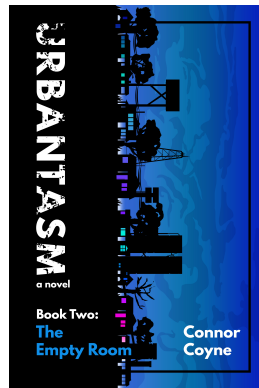


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Book Two in the *Urbantasm* saga is a magical teen noir serial novel dealing with young love, violence and history in a decaying Rust Belt city.



Urbantasm: The Empty Room

Book Two of Four

By Connor Coyne

Urbantasm, Book Two: The Empty Room is a magical teen noir serial novel inspired by the award-winning author's experiences growing up in and around Flint, Michigan. (Gothic Funk Press, September 28, 2019, General Fiction, ISBN: 9780989920254, \$16.00, Trade Paperback, Book Two of Four in a Serial).

Book Two: The Empty Room picks up right where *Book One: The Dying City* left off. John Bridge is only two months into junior high and his previously boring life has already been turned upside-down. His best friend has gone missing, his father has been laid-off from the factory, and John keeps looking over his shoulder for a mysterious adversary: a man with a knife and some perfect blue sunglasses.

As if all this wasn't bad enough, John must now confront his complicated feelings for a classmate who has helped him out of one scrape after another, although he knows little about who she is and what she wants. What does it mean to want somebody? How can you want them if you don't understand them? Does anybody understand anyone, ever? These are hard questions made harder in the struggling city of Akawe, where the factories are closing, the schools are crumbling, and even the streetlights can't be kept on all night.

John and his friends are only thirteen, but they are fighting for their lives and futures. Will they save Akawe, will they escape, or are they doomed? They might find their answers in an empty room... in a city with ten thousand abandoned houses, there will be plenty to choose from.

Excerpt:

I snapped out of bed. I hurried downstairs. I had probably time to make just one call before either of my parents got back. I could call Adam and ask how he was doing, or I could call Lucy and we could talk about... anything. I looked up Lucy's number in the phone book. I knew it from her last name Banner and the address on Elmwood Road. I dialed. Then hung up before it could ring. *Why am I calling her?* I lifted the phone again and tried to hold it steady. *I've got to call her.* I held the speaker against my chest until I heard the braying off-the-hook tone.

You're wasting time! I reset and dialed again. My fingers stumbled across the numbers. *Steady your voice, spaz!* The phone rang.

Pickup.

“Hello?”

It was her mom.

“Hi, can I talk to Lucy?”

A short silence.

“Who's this?”

“John Bridge. I'm in her science class.”

“You were one of the ones here a few days ago?”

“Yeah. Me and my cousin and our friend.”

“Uh huh. Hold on.”

A rustle; her palm on the speaker.

“Lucy!”

Distantly: “Yeah?”

Her voice!

“Phone for you!”

Rustling. Moments. The mother was muttering something, but I couldn't hear what.

“John,” Lucy sang and I squeezed the phone until my hand hurt.

“Hi, hi, Lucy.”

“Hi, what's up?”

“I... I didn't write down the assignment in Kolin's class today. You remember what we're talking about?”

“Yeah. We've got to read the section on amphibians and answer the questions at the end.”

“Amphibians?”

“Frogs. Toads. Newts.” I thought I heard laughter in her voice. “Salamanders.”

“Cool. Yeah, that should be pretty easy, right?”

“I guess so.”

“Thanks.”

“Hey, John?” she asked.

“Yeah?”

“Is Adam, um...” she said. “Is he okay?”

This was better. This was something we could talk about for more than ten seconds. “No. I mean... you heard... about him, right?”

“Yeah. Everyone was talking about it today. What he did.”

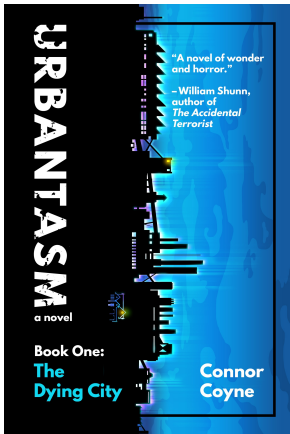
About the Author:

Connor Coyne is a writer living and working in Flint, Michigan. His novel *Urbantasm, Book One: The Dying City* is winner of the Next Generation Indie Book Awards 2019 Young New Adult Award. Hugo- and Nebula-nominee William Shunn has praised *Urbantasm* as “a novel of wonder and horror.” Connor has also authored two other celebrated novels – *Hungry Rats* and *Shattering Glass*, as well as *Atlas*, a short story collection. Connor is on the planning committee for the Flint Festival of Writers and in 2013 represented Flint's 7th Ward as its artist-in-residence for the National Endowment for the Arts' Our Town grant, documented at Intersect 7. In 2007, he earned his Masters of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from the New School. Connor lives in Flint's College Cultural Neighborhood (aka the East Village), less than a mile from the house where he grew up. To interview Connor or receive a review copy of *Urbantasm, Book Two: The Empty Room*, please email him at connor@connorcoyne.com.

<https://www.urbantasm.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/connorcoyne>

Novels By Connor Coyne



“A novel of wonder and horror.” – William Shunn, author of *The Accidental Terrorist*

Urbantasm is a magical teen noir serial novel inspired by the author’s experiences growing up in and around Flint, Michigan. It won the 2019 Next Generation Indie Book Awards for Young New Adult Fiction.

Thirteen-year-old John Bridge’s plans include hooking up with an eighth-grade girl and becoming one of the most popular kids at Radcliffe Junior High, but when he steals a pair of strange blue sunglasses from a homeless person, it drops him into the middle of a gang war overwhelming the once-great Rust Belt town of Akawe.

John doesn’t understand why the sunglasses are such a big deal, but everything, it seems, is on the table. Perhaps he accidentally offended the Chalks, a white supremacist gang trying to expand across the city. Maybe the feud involves his friend Selby, whose father died under mysterious circumstances. It could even have something to do with O-Sugar, a homegrown drug with the seeming ability to distort space. On the night before school began, a group of teenagers took O-Sugar and leapt to their deaths from an abandoned hospital.

John struggles to untangle these mysteries while adjusting to his new school, even as his parents confront looming unemployment and as his city fractures and burns.



“An emotional and aesthetic tour de force.” – Heartland prize-winner Jeffery Renard Allen

“Rat Man, you out there?” you asked.

The Rat Man, a serial killer, is on the loose in Flint, Michigan, and nobody can stop him. Except you, Meredith Malady, a high-school girl with a dysfunctional family and a score to settle. Running away from home is the first step, but where will you stay? How will you survive? And what will you do when you meet the Rat Man face to face?



“A hypnotic tale that is at once universal and otherworldly.” – Gordon Young, author of *Teardown: Memoir of a Vanishing City*

Just when the whole world has written off the city of Arkaic, Michigan, billionaire A. Olan puts up funds for a new university in an abandoned psychiatric hospital. There, strange engines turn human memories into electrical power. Join students Samo, Monty, Ezzie, and Dunya as they study, work, flirt, explore, and battle powers of ancient evil. Will they survive their first year of college?