



## Fall Back Down When I Die

*Joe Wilkins*

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Wendell Newman, a young ranch hand in Montana, has recently lost his mother, leaving him an orphan, as his father met a violent end more than a decade earlier. His bank account holds less than a hundred dollars, and he owes back taxes on what remains of the land his parents owned, as well as money for the surgeries that failed to save his mother's life.

Into this situation comes seven-year-old Rowdy Burns, the illegitimate son of Wendell's cousin, who is incarcerated after falling prey to addiction. Traumatized, Rowdy is mute and damaged. Caring for him will be a test of Wendell's will and resolve, and yet he comes to love the boy more than he ever thought possible. That love will be stretched to the breaking point during the first legal wolf hunt in Montana in more than thirty years, when a murder results in a manhunt, and Wendell finds himself on the wrong side of a disaffected fringe group, hoping both to protect Rowdy and to avoid the same violent fate that claimed his father.

This dark and haunting debut novel is an unforgettable tale of sacrificial love, with two characters who win the reader's heart from the first page to the last.

## Fall Back Down When I Die Details

Date : Expected publication: March 12th 2019 by Little, Brown and Company

ISBN : 9780316475358

Author : Joe Wilkins

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## From Reader Review Fall Back Down When I Die for online ebook

### jeremy says

poet and memoirist joe wilkins's debut novel, *fall back down when i die*, is a taut, tender tale of hardscrabble life in the american west—and the collision of modernity, fringe belief, and violence. set in the bull mountains of eastern montana (where wilkins was born and raised), *fall back down when i die* covers a wide terrain: familial duty and loyalty, generational bonds, social disenfranchisement, political entitlement, clashing environmental and economic forces, the legacy of landscape and lifestyle. wilkins's characters are proud, complex, resolute, yearning, broken and beautiful, each brimming with verve, loss, and longing. *fall back down when i die* is a moving, naturalistic, and ultimately rewarding work, one which amply displays wilkins's talents for describing the majestic and the complicated, be it the rugged contours of the bull mountains or the softer, less discernible topographies of the human heart.

*the land where the failures of the nation, the failures of myth, met the failures of men. where history went to die. where rivers brimful in april slicked to gravel by august. where the grass was tough and thick before the plow and ever after the dust lifted from the sour, alkali hardpan left in the wake of the plow. a land of ravaging pine beetles, of ever longer summers and shorter, dryer winters. the land itself animated sorrow and anger, birthed and cradled and raised up failure and fear, a raw and righteous violence.*

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### Susanne Strong says

**4 Brilliant Stars.**

#### **A Book WIth Heart and Absolutely Fabulous Characters. It doesn't get much better!**

When Wendell Newman is asked to take care of his seven year old nephew, he feels that he has no choice but to say yes. Rowdy, is mute and shows signs of aggression and abuse. Wendell is almost a kid himself and hardly has two pennies to rub together, yet Rowdy needs him.

There are certain things, that have been out of Wendell's control all of his life, his family, his past and most of his own life choices. With Rowdy however, Wendell sees him, as a chance to do something good and right some wrongs. The bond that grows between these two is immediate and fierce. If only everything in life was that easy.

Wendell is a man who is all heart. He gave it to Rowdy the second he met him and even though Rowdy doesn't speak a word, his affection is clear. Both of these young men grabbed my heart from the start.

Though this book starts a little slow, and left me with many a question throughout, the payoff is worth it.

**“Fall Back Down When I Die” is a novel that evokes emotion, plain and simple.** Emotion for Wendell and Rowdy, emotion for Gillian, the High School Principal / Special Ed Teacher, who wants to help others but whose past won't always let her. These characters ate at me. Made me wonder what hard living and pasts that just don't quit must be like.

**Admittedly, there was a moment or two when my eyes filled with tears and when a couple of drops fell. When my heart caught in my throat, tight tight tight. Oh yeah. This one gets to you my friends.** My suggestion of course, is to find out for yourselves. When I close my eyes, I'm right back there.. Wendell and Rowdy.. and my heart is full.

A huge thank you to NetGalley, Little Brown and Company and to Joe Wilkins for an ARC of this novel in exchange for an honest review.

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Will be published on Twitter and Amazon on 3.12.19.  
Excerpt to be published on Instagram.

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### **Andrew Unger says**

For all the think-pieces written on Trump's America, Wilkins' novel finally gives voice, breath, and pathos to the real people living out their lives in one of the most misunderstood regions in America. There are politics in Joe Wilkins' Fall Back Down When I Die, but only because, in today's Mountain West, politics are an inescapable tension. For readers of Ron Rash, Brad Watson, Jim Harrison, and Michael Farris Smith, comes Wilkins. This story of a young ranch-hand set with the impossible task of raising a young boy in a place caught in an ideological war simmering just on the verge of violence is woven masterfully into the story of a bleeding heart liberal teacher doing her best to do her best in a place resistant to change. Where you might fear and long for climactic violence as their lives come crashing together -- perhaps to justify a fear of this place and these people -- Wilkins withholds. What he offers instead is a seamlessly beautiful emotional arc anchored deep in the hard-dirt of this dispassioned and heart-worn country.

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### **Chris LaTray says**

There isn't a wrong note in Wilkins's new novel. He manages to pull off the development of characters simultaneous with a growing sense of unease, that something really bad is going to happen. We just don't know what, or to whom. Wilkins handles the landscapes and the clash of cultures around who that land and everything on it really belongs to, pitting neighbor against neighbor, outsider against local. It feels like everything I've loved about Wilkins's work -- poetry, essays, short fiction -- all came together in service to this brilliant piece of writing.

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