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CHRISTIAN SCHLEGEL

ryman

Christian Schlegel's *ryman* consists of three "talk poems," in the tradition of the artist David Antin. The first talk was conducted at the author's desk in the Hudson Valley, the second over Zoom, and the third, in two parts, while he paced a cemetery in Ithaca and a businessperson's hotel room in Albany. Topics include the painter Robert Ryman and his contemporaries, Romantic poetry, avant-garde film, obsessive-compulsive rumination, and friendship.

These pieces were composed ex tempore, recorded, and mostly faithfully transcribed, for an effect very close to speech, or thought in action. Something like poetry.

PRAISE:

"What happens when pages talk? What are these forms of attention and involvement that they instigate – forms which feel so qualitatively different from reading even as I know that reading is exactly (is 'all') I'm doing? Christian Schlegel's *ryman* is a transformative sequence of poems which gently, deliberately, with detailed concentration, as well as great risk and vulnerability, hold open a space-time for something like participatory rumination. To 'read' them is to play a part in their new social system. I was addressed, committed, and everything mattered."

– **Kate Briggs**

"To talk is very pleasant when it looks like writing,' writes Gertrude Stein in *Listen to Me* (1936). Here, where to read is to hear and to talk is to compose, the reverse is the case. Schlegel's wager is to run on by elaborating, digressing, extrapolating, and ruminating, to circle back to produce what David Antin refers to as 'radical coherency.' Radical because it develops 'sometimes rather startlingly' and is held together by something so elusive, it's nothing if not pleasant. I, for one, am all ears."

– **Mónica de la Torre**



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Christian Schlegel is the author of the poetry collection *Honest James* (The Song Cave, 2015). He holds an MFA from the Iowa Writers' Workshop and a doctorate in English from Harvard, teaches English and creative writing at Pierrepont School in Connecticut, and lives in New Haven.



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