

TODD IN ETERNITY

by

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A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing

Boise State University

May 2021

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BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COLLEGE

DEFENSE COMMITTEE AND FINAL READING APPROVALS

of the thesis submitted by

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Thesis Title: Todd in Eternity

Date of Final Oral Examination: 15 March 2019

The following individuals read and discussed the thesis submitted by student EJ Pettinger, and they evaluated the student's presentation and response to questions during the final oral examination. They found that the student passed the final oral examination.

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The final reading approval of the thesis was granted by Brady Udall, M.F.A., Chair of the Supervisory Committee. The thesis was approved by the Graduate College.

ABSTRACT

This work represents the first significant portion of a novel in progress. It is a first-person narration following a teenage boy's involvement with a modern-day prophet. The story examines the nature of visionary belief systems and the ways in which they can degrade a person's connection to the everyday world. The bulk of the narrative is concerned with the protagonist's struggle to escape the dark dream of the prophet and reconnect to the plain givenness of the world. The narrative explores the religious use of horror and glory as visionary elements, and the role of humor and affection in the everyday world. The story is told from a vantage point beyond its events and the tone and manner of telling are intended to include a significant amount of reflection. The intention of the work is not to denigrate religious beliefs but simply to dramatize the ways in which extreme beliefs generate paranoia and disdain of the everyday world. I also hope to portray the everyday world in a way that honors it.