



Ash Wednesday

By *Ethan Hawke*

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Ash Wednesday By Ethan Hawke

From the actor, director, and writer Ethan Hawke: a piercing novel of love, marriage, and renewal.

Jimmy is AWOL from the army, but—with characteristic fierceness and terror—he's about to embark on the biggest commitment of his life. Christy is pregnant with Jimmy's child, and she's determined to head home, with or without Jimmy, to face up to her past and prepare for the future. Somehow, barreling across America from Albany to New Orleans to Ohio and Texas in a souped-up Chevy Nova, Christy and Jimmy are transformed from passionate but conflicted lovers into a young family on a magnificent journey.

Ash Wednesday is a novel of blazing emotion and remarkable grace, a tale that captures the intensity—the excitement, fear, and joy—of being on the threshold of the mysterious country of marriage and parenthood. Powerful, assured, large of heart, and punctuated by moments of tremendous humor, it represents, for Hawke the novelist, a major leap forward.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Ash Wednesday By Ethan Hawke Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #242060 in eBooks
- Published on: 2002-07-23
- Released on: 2002-07-23
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Hawke's protagonist, Jimmy Heartsick, is a bit like Holden Caulfield, except he sports a mustache ("Most guys with mustaches look like fags, but I don't. I touch mine too much, though. I touch it all the time"), drives a '69 Chevy Nova ("I took the muffler out so it sounds like a Harley. People love it") and is an AWOL soldier from Albany, N.Y. Jimmy can be a jerk, but he knows it. He's immature, idealistic, intelligent, honest and painfully self-examining, and is trying to wrap his head around the fact that his girlfriend, Christy, is pregnant with his child. The plot revolves around Jimmy's decision and tumultuous journey to follow Christy home to Texas. Any listeners wondering about the actor's second foray into the world of novel writing (his first, *The Hottest State*, got mixed reviews) will be pleasantly surprised by the spirited fullness of this tale of love, passion, disillusionment and self-discovery. Hawke's acting prowess is a great asset to his reading of the book. He delivers the book's dual first person narration, which alternates with each chapter, as if it were his own life story, with palpable immediacy and emotion. The result resonates with integrity and soul. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

Hawke again departs from the silver screen to bring us this story of AWOL Jimmy and his pregnant girlfriend, who are heading home in a souped-up Chevy Nova to try to straighten out their lives. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

From [Booklist](#)

This is the second novel (following *Hottest State*, 1996) by Hawke, the young actor who recently starred in *Training Day*. A quasi road novel, it features hotheaded, impulsive Staff Sergeant Jimmy Heartsock, who has gone AWOL from the army in order to chase down and propose to his pregnant girlfriend, Christy, with whom he had broken up some 15 hours earlier. Christy has hopped a bus heading for her home state of Texas; Jimmy catches up with her and agrees to take her home if she will marry him. As the two drive cross country in Jimmy's '69 Chevy Nova, they engage in an extended dialogue dissecting the genesis and evolution of their relationship and the struggle to accept the responsibilities of marriage and parenthood. Unfortunately, the novel consists almost entirely of dialogue and extended interior monologues that eventually blur into one voice. Thus we get opinions on everything from John Starks' basketball playing ("He was an artist. He played with feeling, like Mozart") to loneliness ("I was very concerned about loneliness when I was a little girl"). After a while, it begins to feel like one of those rambling, all-night conversations you had in college fueled by too much coffee, too many cigarettes, and a lot of bad fluorescent lighting. Hawke seems to be aiming for the eccentric, low-life ambience of a Barry Gifford novel, but this is definitely the lite version. Hats off to Hawke for putting himself out there, but it's his celebrity, not his prose, that will sell this one. REVWR

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Helen Wright:

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