



THE LAST MAD SURGE OF YOUTH

Mark Hodkinson



## The Last Mad Surge Of Youth

Mark Hodkinson

*(published by Pomona Books)*

Fiction aimed at a faithful depiction of the lives of musicians and music industry types usually ends up nothing more than a collection of haggard old cliches and character stereotypes, so it's refreshing to read a book by someone who's experienced these characters first hand.

Mark Hodkinson has worked in the music industry for over ten years, and in his second book, he has poured all of his most in-depth observations of the bands he's encountered into the story's main characters.

The tale follows the lives of two old school mates who form a band, then go their separate ways only to meet up later as slightly dysfunctional middle-aged adults. Their journeys in between their parting and re-encounter is the basis for most of the novel, with both reminiscing about the good old days and how they've grown so far from the teens they once were, when they burned with ambition.

It's a tale of a mid-life crisis but done in a wry and amusing way with plenty of twists and turns.

The narrative skips between past and present day but never feels disjointed or loses any momentum. The main character, Barrett, struggles to come to terms with his subsequent failure as a solo artist as he juggles a home life with a wife and kids who don't really understand his desperate urge to cling to his youthful ways. That – combined with the fact he's turned to drink to cope with life's let-downs and the bizarre situations he encounters – is enough to keep you hooked.

His mate, who has settled into a steady job which he loathes, has recently divorced and is searching for a new way to get excitement back into his life, also provides plenty of interest. "The Last Mad Surge Of Youth" is a well-written story reflecting desperation, good times and the conviction that, above all else, rock'n'roll must prevail!

**Paula Gregory**