



3-1-2011

The Attic Express and Other Macabre Stories by Alex Hamilton, Ashtree Press, 2007

George W. Geib

Butler University, ggeib@butler.edu

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Recommended Citation

Geib, George W., "*The Attic Express and Other Macabre Stories* by Alex Hamilton, Ashtree Press, 2007" (2011). *LAS Faculty Book Reviews*. 80.

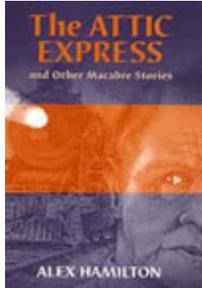
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Recommended Readings



The Attic Express and Other Macabre Stories

by Alex Hamilton

Reviewed by George Geib

Alex Hamilton is one of Britain's foremost authors of stories of dark fiction. This volume brings together two of his earlier anthologies plus three more recent pieces. All share his macabre outlook, placing characters at the gruesome boundaries between the routine and the fantastic. Again and again seemingly normal situations spiral out of control as accepted, conventional responses prove worthless in the face of the ghastly and the unforeseen. Much of Hamilton's strength lies in his power to evoke seemingly normal human settings. A very British author, he delights in public school and university settings, in lazy summer holidays, crowded London theatres, and daily routines of home and work. Yet each time he introduces the grim, irrational, or supernatural in plausible and disturbing ways. His title story is among the best, as a father builds a model train layout for an unappreciative child whose fantasies about rail yards become very real and lethal. The book is an Ashtree imprint, a Canadian small press that specializes in limited editions of books in the tradition of the great ghost story writer, M. R. James. The publisher made the good decision to use the artistic talents of Keith Minnion, a master of dark fantasy, on their cover. Hamilton's tales, and the full Ashtree list, deserve your attention if like a good tale of evil spirits..

- George Geib is Professor of History at Butler University.