



# A Shorter Life

*Alan Jenkins*

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## **A Shorter Life** Alan Jenkins

In his most eloquent and formally satisfying collection to date, Alan Jenkins plays a series of powerful and haunting variations on love and loss. The themes that run through our lives are relatively few, for all that they sound subtly different to each of us, with their own rich freight of places and faces. In poems that pay homage to what is unique to his own past experience - a suburban fifties upbringing, a heady youth of rebellion and exploration - Jenkins reminds us vividly of what is experienced by us all. The search for love (or failing that, sex), the passing of time and the inevitability of pain and grief, the struggle for transcendence against our awareness of limitation: these are the things that can suddenly seem to compose a life - a life not so much reduced to essentials as seen in its passionate essence, a 'shorter' life. Though not in any formal sense a sequel, this poignant book recapitulates some of the motifs of *The Drift* (2000) and earlier volumes, to offer an extended meditation on memory and recurrence, and a statement - compelling, candid, sorrowful and subtle - of life's beauty and brevity.

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