

## Check it Out, Aug. 17, 2011

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I know one should not judge a book by its cover, but truthfully, many people do, and I am no different. On a recent trip to the Buda Library, I was browsing through their newly acquired books and a title grabbed my attention, "Long Time Ago Good: Sunset Dreams from Austin and Beyond" by Lowell Mick White. The picture on the front cover depicts a blurry, angry dog barking at an armadillo. I opened the book and discovered it was a collection of short stories. Based on what I saw on the cover, I had a feeling these stories might have some edge to them. I was right.

The title is an Ernest Hemingway reference to one of his famous quotes: "Long time ago good. Now no good." After reading these stories, I think it is an apt summation of the feelings expressed by the characters when Old Austin meets New Austin. The "Beyond" part of the title refers to other localities mentioned like: Buda, San Marcos and the Hill Country. The author uses these familiar surroundings to give the reader a feeling that he or she has met these characters before.

This book is not for everyone. There is strong language and adult themes, but it is not gratuitous. There are some depressed, angry men and women, but the reader can feel sympathy, hope and redemption for these characters, as well as laugh with them. I know I did.

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