



Brand New Ancients

Kate Tempest

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Yes, the gods are on the park bench, the gods are on the bus, / The gods are all here, the gods are in us. / The gods are timeless, fearless, fighting to be bold, / conviction is a heavy hand to hold, / grip it, winged sandals tearing up the pavement -- / you, me, everyone: Brand New Ancients.

Kate Tempest's words in *Brand New Ancients* are written to be read aloud; the book combines poem, rap, and humanist sermon, by turns tender and fierce. Set in Southeast London, *Brand New Ancients* finds the mythic in the mundane. It is the story of two half-brothers, Thomas and Clive, unknown to each other -- Thomas the result of an affair between his mother and Clive's father. Tempest, with wide-ranging empathy, takes us inside the passionless marriage of Jane and Kevin -- the man who suspects Thomas is not his son, but loves him just the same -- and the neighboring home of Mary and Brian, where betrayal has not been so placidly accepted. The sons of these two households -- quiet, creative Thomas and angry, destructive Clive -- will cross paths in adolescence, their fates converging with mortal fury.

These characters' loves, their infidelities, their disappointments and their small comforts -- these, Tempest argues, are timeless. Our lives and our choices are no less important than those of history and myth. Awarded the Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry, *Brand New Ancients* insists on our importance as individuals -- and asserts Kate Tempest's importance as a talent impossible to ignore.

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