

Ava Champion
518-506-7215
achampion@gm.slc.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On-Sale Date: September 12, 2017

Let's get off this godforsaken planet, pronto!

Praise for *Hug Chickenpenny: The Panegyric of an Anomalous Child*:

"S. Craig Zahler is certain to become one of the great imaginers of our time." — **Clive Barker**

"A sharp look at family, deformity, community, and belonging. At once moving and merciless, this is a chronicle of a hapless but still altogether human life." — **Brian Evenson, author of *A Collapse of Horses***

"An exceptional, original, and inherently fascinating read from beginning to end." — **Midwest Book Review**

"Imagine a blend of Tim Burton's *Big Fish*, David Lynch's *The Elephant Man*, and the wonderful quirkiness of a Lemony Snicket book, and you might have some idea of what you're getting into here. I dare you not to fall in love with little Hug Chickenpenny." — **Max Booth III, *Dark Moon Digest***

"A relentlessly readable, inimitable and heart-wrenching story. A lot of people try to create something that defies reader expectations; few succeed like S. Craig Zahler in *Hug Chickenpenny*. This is also a book that will stick with you." — **Robert Ashcroft, author of *The Megarothke***

Hug Chickenpenny: The Panegyric of an Anomalous Child

By S. Craig Zahler

Hug Chickenpenny: The Panegyric of an Anomalous Child (September 12, 2017; Cinestate; \$15.00) award-winning screenwriter and novelist, author S. Craig Zahler, creates a brilliant combination of Lemony Snicket's *Series of Unfortunate Events* and Mary Shelley's gothic, spooky style of *Frankenstein*. S. Craig Zahler grabs his reader's attention by enticing them to care for Hug, the anomalous child.

Hug Chickenpenny, a misshapen orphan, is shuffled around from an early age. With a huge heart and small lungs, Hug learns the hard way how cruel the world can be, especially to someone with deformed limbs, fangs, and missing fingers. The story begins with Abigail climbing into her best friend Meredith's home, only to find her lifeless body and Hug, her newborn infant. The story then flashes forward to George Doggett, the kind caretaker of the orphanage where Hug resides.

Eventually, a teratologist catches word of Hug, and visits him. Georgie is worried the doctor will adopt Hug, and implores Abigail to at least look at the child. This proves to be too emotional for her, and Hug goes to live with the teratologist. Treated as a specimen by his adoptive father, Doctor Hannersby, Hug struggles to understand the meaning of living on earth. He dreams of traveling to outer space.

In a grim twist of fate, Doctor Hannersby consumes poisonous mushrooms, resulting in Hug's return to his first home, Johnstone's Home for the Unwanted. Hug feels he is to blame for Doctor Hannersby's passing, as he blames himself for his mother's death. Georgie, the only person to treat Hug with kindness and respect, has been fired, inconceivably leaving the verbally-abusive secretary Jennifer Kimberly to run the orphanage.

In a heroic and timely rescue, Abigail finally swoops in to adopt Hug as her own, forcing Jennifer Kimberly into silence. Under Abigail's care, Hug progressively falls more ill and begins to mysteriously cough up amethyst crystals, leaving his doctors befuddled. As time passes, Abigail marries Sandy, a southern gentleman, and Hug settles into his new role within a semi-nuclear family, having now a mother, stepfather and stepbrother Rex. Rex becomes a close friend to Hug.

In a reversal of fortune, Hug finds himself sent to a new boarding home, The Program for Productive and Disciplined Youths, where his care is limited and the home is grim. His health quickly declines. However, he still strongly holds onto his dreams of exploring outer space and leaves enough room in his small heart for love.

About S. Craig Zahler:

S. Craig Zahler, an award-winning screenwriter, director, novelist, cinematographer, and musician, was born in Miami, Florida. Zahler has been writing for a long time, subsidizing his writing career for nine years by working as a catering chef. Zahler wrote and directed the motion pictures *Bone Tomahawk* and *Brawl in Cell Block 99*. In addition to his movies, he has written several novels, including *Wraiths of the Broken Land* and *A Congregation of Jackals*. S. Craig Zahler divides his time writing with playing in several bands, including Realmbuilder, a heavy metal band. He co-composed the score for his film *Bone Tomahawk*.

Talking Points for S. Craig Zahler:

1. Discuss how the character Hug Chickenpenny came to life.
2. Discuss influences for Hug Chickenpenny: The Panegyric of an Anomalous Child.
3. Discuss the difference between screenwriting and prose.
4. Discuss the original artwork on the cover.
5. Discuss the themes of space and Hug's longing for outer space.
6. Discuss hints that Hug may be alien and who his father might be.
7. Discuss choice of genre; switching from preferred Westerns to a Gothic Thriller.

8. Discuss the moral responsibility people have to each other and how this is portrayed in Hug Chickenpenny.
9. Discuss the different points of view; specifically Abigail and Georgie in the beginning.
10. Discuss themes of death and how they affect the main character.