

Dear Victoria,

I hope this email finds you well.

Happily, I'm in a unique and lucky position as a debut novelist. Some colleagues circulated my manuscript, and got it to HarperCollins. HC responded enthusiastically (and gave me a lot of notes). I found their feedback intriguing and incisive, and I've spent the last six months revising along their guidelines. It was a successful process, and I just sent them the revised m/s last week.

The project has attracted the interest of a few agents. One has taken me out to lunch twice now to discuss the direction of the project, but we aren't sure yet if our vision for the project is a match. HC made it clear they have a short list of agents they will recommend, but before things go any faster, I wanted to reach out to a few agents who were on my own list.

The story concerns fifteen-year-old former lacrosse star Brady Baylock. His chance at being high school golden boy was shattered once his father, a notable astrophysicist, disappeared. Brady's gone off his antidepressants and is experiencing an escalating series of bizarre and terrifying phenomena. Besides having the state of his sanity thrown into question, these events are causing tension with his best friend, wreaking havoc with his grades, and hindering his budding romance with a mysterious girl at school.

Brady realizes he has a genetic anomaly that not only allows him to decrypt the fabric of space and time, but pass through it. On the other side of the fabric, Brady finds a fractured, irradiated version of his New England town called the Quintessence, that's as psychedelic and seductive as it is dangerous and broken—a cosmological mistake that was never meant to be. Searching for his father, and desperate to save his deeply depressed mother, Brady learns the only ones who can help him are a feral gang of thieves, who manipulate their consciousness to commit horrific crimes.

Brady travels back and forth from the Quintessence, and the two realities begin to bleed. Brady is not only at risk from radiation, but of getting a lifelong residency at his town's forbidding psych ward, colloquially known as The Longhampton Home For Lunatic Teens. As Brady decides just how far he's willing to go to put the pieces of his old life back together, he discovers his father wasn't who he thought he was, and he has a brother who wants a piece of Brady's life all to himself.

THE GRAY LIGHT CHRONICLES is a YA fantasy novel. It's 92,000 words. It's been compared to THE RAVEN BOYS and MISS PEREGRINE'S HOME FOR PECULIAR CHILDREN. I am querying you because you're attracted to the dark and edgy, you value strong voices, you appreciate humor, and you don't shy away from horror.

I studied English, Creative Writing, and Theater at Northwestern University. I began my career as a playwright, but was accepted into the MFA program of the Yale School of Drama as an actor. When I'm not writing, I continue to act in TV and film.

I have included the first two chapters below. Thank you for your consideration.

Very Best Wishes,  
Derek Milman

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### Young Adult Author Derek Milman and the Last Pre-Pandemic Book Tour

Young Adult Author Derek Milman joins Queries, Qualms, & Quirks this week to discuss going from acting to writing, how his brother's bachelor party launched his writing career, meeting agents for coffee, two atypical experiences at opposite ends of the spectrum, the last book tour before the pandemic, media mail, focusing on the work in the middle of the business, and being careful about choosing a publisher.

Derek Milman is the author of the YA novels SWIPE RIGHT FOR MURDER and SCREAM ALL NIGHT. A classically-trained actor, who worked for years in TV and film, Derek now lives in Brooklyn where he (tries) to write full time.

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