

Follow the Sun

Edward J. Delaney

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Outstanding dialogue and realistic characters illuminate a convincing mystery in Edward J. Delaney's *Follow the Sun*.

In coastal New England, tradition-hardened men are up against the sea, a dwindling supply of lobster, and the temptation of easy-to-score drugs. When Quinn Boyle and his crewman, Freddy Santoro, go missing on a run, it's par for the course—especially because Quinn's boat was barely seaworthy and both Quinn and Santoro have drug and legal problems.

As time lengthens and the men are presumed dead, the book broadens to survey the lives of those left behind. Foremost are Quinn's older brother, Robbie, and estranged teenage daughter, Christine.

Also in the mix are Dawn, Robbie's romantic interest, and Gina, the ex-wife whom Quinn owes so much in alimony and child support that his disappearance seems like a well-timed escape. All of these characters are richly developed and absorbing.

The book moves easily from the present to the past, filling in the backgrounds of Robbie, Quinn, Gina, and Santoro in ways that make it clear that—Robbie's sense of responsibility aside—life is easier without the presence of the difficult, troubled men.

A tip from Dawn suggests that Quinn may not be dead at all; though it might be wiser to let dead dogs lie, Robbie feels compelled to put his job and his life savings on the line and follow the slender lead.

The narrative is well-crafted throughout, written in an artfully terse style that not only carries the story but conveys a sense of the working-class world it's set in. The dialogue is especially sharp, delivered in quick, polished punches. Characters can be sarcastic, even harsh in their dealings with each other, but their humanity and underlying sorrows come through in every exchange.

Follow the Sun is a realistically imagined mystery whose satisfying, if bittersweet, resolution never betrays the heroism of ordinary lives.

SUSAN WAGGONER (May/June 2018)

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