

Going Home: A Return to Golden Mycenae

Dennis Frank Macek

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Going Home is a time-bending thriller that raises questions about connections between modern politics and the political past.

Dennis Frank Macek's political novel *Going Home* blurs the lines between the past and present in order to show the similarities between ancient Greece and the US.

Dan is an all-American everyman: a retiree who used to run a small business in Reno, Nevada. Now in his golden years, he is thinking about running for president on the Conservative-Reform Party ticket. Dan's campaign focus is on rural, small-town, and yeoman concerns like corralling climate change and fixing the national debt.

Just when Dan decides to embark on his controversial presidential race, his mind turns on him. Dan begins receiving visions of himself serving in the army of King Agamemnon during the Mycenaean Greek siege of the Hittite city of Troy. These visions are so real and lifelike that Dan comes to believe that he was once a Bronze Age warrior in the retinue of fabled warriors like Achilles. Dan taps into this history in order to inform his present fight in the contemporary USA, which, to Dan, looks a lot like majestic Troy.

This novel is not easy to define. Part of it is a mystery story insofar as Dan's visions come out of nowhere and are presented like non-sequiturs for the majority of the book. There are also elements of political science—after all, the conclusion draws parallels between the fight for and fall of Troy and post-Obama America.

The story becomes a slog because of its odd juxtapositions between ancient battle scenes, rendered in italics, and contemporary events. What happens outside of the city gates of Troy is far more exciting than Dan's days in Reno—that is, until Dan foils a "Trojan Horse" plot put together by corporate interests, a twist that's shoved into the novel rather abruptly. Even when the action scenes are entertaining, they tend to devolve into grandiose expositions on the importance of fighting amoral power.

The ending is not in keeping with the epic nature of Homer's immortal poem. Instead, it functions as a kind of call to arms to the audience, asking them to join Dan on his quest to save the environment and the American republic. There is no subtlety here, nor any acknowledgement that Homer's story was a paean to the lost monarchy of Mycenae.

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BENJAMIN WELTON (August 14, 2019)

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