



Green Gospel

L.C. Fiore

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History tells us that humans, as a race, need few excuses for committing violence: they can hate, injure, and kill on the basis of whim alone. Then there are those who are compelled to enforce or defend a cause—and therefore place their calculated acts of destruction in the category of “necessary.” In L.C. Fiore’s novel *Green Gospel*, the author unspools the ripples resulting from just such a violent act, this one committed not in the name of a god or a country, but in the name of the earth.

The plot of *Green Gospel* develops at a coy pace, shedding an unsettling truth or horrific memory here and there, meanwhile detailing the present-day lives of Christians living in a small town in steamy Southern Florida. One is an overworked mother on the verge of losing her disturbed children; another, an overextended pastor at the town’s evangelical church; and another, a police officer who lost his own daughter a decade before and takes an interest in the town’s newcomer.

Thus we meet Edie, a runaway of mysterious origin who, bloodied and disoriented, is picked up on the outskirts of town. Her impact on the lives of its inhabitants forms the centerpiece of *Green Gospel*. While the locals pursue their own agendas of living and enthusiastic worship, they are unaware that they house a different kind of zealot among them.

Before long, Edie’s memories and past begin to haunt her, and everything following that point gets very interesting very fast. From cover to cover there is not a dull moment in *Green Gospel*. Fiore’s writing rises off the page in its deft beauty, its imagery vivid, yet straightforward and crisp: “... young girls pick their way across a landscape that is barren like the stone of ancient ruins. The landscape sweeps slightly up; the girls are naked and the red color of the sky makes their bodies seem overly done, the pink color of boiled shrimp.”

An accomplished writer has arrived on the scene with this fireball of a novel. *Green Gospel* will hopefully be the first of many powerful works to come.

LEIA MENLOVE (September / October 2011)

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