



## Half

### Sharon Harrigan

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Sharon Harrigan's *Half* mimics the triumphant defects of every family in its excavations of the peculiar remains of one. Narrated through the entwined perceptions and insights of identical twins, seldom heard by anyone other than the speakers' mirror images, the book's conversations and bickering are as familiar as the deranged chatter of any insanely normal mind.

The gripping prologue launches into the midst of the story's climax. Seated on either side of their mother at their father's funeral, the twins, a mute duet, fill in their family's backstory at breakneck speed. They are more leisurely about pondering whichever sensory and tactile impressions speak loudest to them in the moment.

When their father's friend accuses the twins, now wives and mothers, of having killed his best friend, the concept of murder is too preposterous to be given a second thought. Or so it would seem. After silently reminding one another that they never meant to hurt anyone, the sisters spend the rest of the book dismembering life with their father in an attempt to justify their actions.

Upon regressing twenty-five years, the twins recount their singular story in the minds and words of their innocent, five-year-old selves. Ignorant of the limitations imposed upon a language or a life by those old enough to understand the rules better, they reexperience how their father drilled spelling-rule exceptions into them so many times that he left them full of holes. The only problem with going back to confirm their undeniable victimization at the hands of their godlike father is that agony and ecstasy, torment and glory don't always abide by the rules once hindsight enters the mix. Harrigan's novel will leave you eagerly turning pages to discover what happens next.

LINDA THORLAKSON (May / June 2020)

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