



Shifty

Lynn E. Hazen

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In *Shifty* (Tricycle Press, 978-1-58246-257-8), Lynn E. Hazen's title character (call him Soli, please) is a pragmatically adaptable foster child of fifteen who roams San Francisco in his guardian's van without a driver's license. He habitually breaks rules while fulfilling responsibilities thrust upon him and gets into scrapes with police, a bag lady, and a would-be kidnapper. In state care since infancy, Soli wants to know his history. He comes to realize that his household—composed of a hero-worshipping little girl, a crack baby, and a laid-back foster mother—is a loving family. Soli describes his caretaker, funning on the Eurythmics: “Martha’s sing-ing out of tune again along with the oldies on the radio. As usual she’s getting half the lyrics wrong. I swear I hear her singing, ‘Sweet dreams are made of cheese...’” When a stone-hearted social worker decides to break them up, the quick-witted but shortsighted Soli acts to prevent it.

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