

★ **Sooner or Later Everything Falls into the Sea****Sarah Pinsker**

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Shattering melancholia and desire and cobbling together fresh wonders from the pieces, the stories of Sarah Pinsker's speculative *Sooner or Later Everything Falls into the Sea* emit appealing weirdness.

In these odd and alluring tales, yearning manifests itself into something tangible; it congeals, breathes, and breaks the barriers between dreams and reality. A never-mother is internally called, along with hundreds of others, to a California seashore, where wanted, haunting children emerge from the waves. A community traveling through deep space for generations loses its ability to make art: "People on Earth wrote about blue skies because they'd stood under grey ones. They wrote about night because there was such a thing as day .... Past and future are both abstractions now."

A computer chip embedded with the notion of a Colorado highway transfers its wanderlust to a human patient. Memories are simultaneously cherished and evaded. In the cli-fi title story, the architects of Earth's destruction have taken to cushy ocean liners as their swan song; on shore, those they left behind forge new, gentler lives. In "The Low Hum of Her," a father and daughter escape historical horrors with the help of an imitation grandmother and her birdcage belly.

Every ounce of the familiar is garnished with a twist. In Pinsker's universe, the truth about alien life lies beneath family idylls, time travel is a means of staying sane, and there are ways around the sirens that block the bay. The concluding story gives new meaning to "kill your darlings."

Whether Pinsker's characters are on spacecraft jetting toward the future or are in the distant past, they contend with familiar worries and wants: questions of what should be forgotten and what should be preserved; concerns around revealing their identities to people who only see in black and white. Even at their most winding and imaginative, these are tales that feel like home, if it's "home" regarded from a different angle. *Sooner or Later Everything Falls into the Sea* is a collection whose musing visions none should try to resist.

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (March/April 2019)

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