

To Lay to Rest Our Ghosts

Caitlin Hamilton Summie

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What is remembered; what is missed; what will never be again—these are the things Caitlin Hamilton Summie holds in her deft hands, opening them to us and calling us to look, to taste, to feel. The palpable void left in a small child's life by a father's death in war; the loss of a sister whose inner light and exuberance had been all that could hold a fragile family together; what happens in a mother's heart the first time her child turns away from her; the struggle to find one's place in a world in which sensitivity is a liability; even the need to fight out one's grief—all these are addressed with the tenderness of a wise observer whose heart is large enough, kind enough, to embrace them all without judgment.

Summie's intense and finely crafted stories are set in places as diverse as World War II Kansas; a poor, crime and drug-ridden New York City neighborhood; and the countryside and Twin Cities of Minnesota. Her characters are ordinary, flawed human beings struggling to find their place in the world and bumping up against others who are equally flawed. Attempts are made to dull the pain with busyness, drink, denial, or the passage of time, but Summie knows better than to offer these as answers. Instead, her stories reach into the hidden places of the heart and break them open to healing light, offering a touch of grace and hope of reconciliation.

KRISTINE MORRIS (July/August 2017)

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