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## Thanksgiving

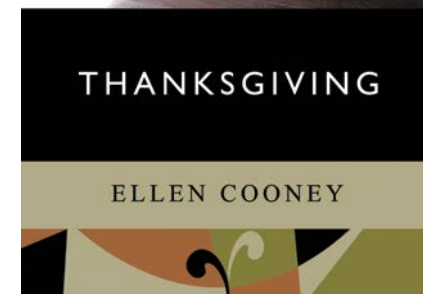
by Ellen Cooney

**One family. One table. One meal. 350 years.**

This dramatic, highly inventive novel presents the story of one family through many generations, as Thanksgiving dinner is prepared.

The narrative moves swiftly and richly through time and changes as we experience the lives of the Morleys against the background of historical events. This is history that comes fully alive, for we become part of the family ourselves, sharing their fortunes and tragedies, knowing their truths from their lies, watching their possessions handed down or lost forever. All along, in the same house, in the same room, Morley women are getting dinner ready, one part at a time, in a room that begins with a hearth of Colonial times and ends as a present-day kitchen.

*Thanksgiving* serves up history in a lively, entertaining way that offers an original viewpoint of the everyday concerns of one family across the generations.



### Praise for Ellen Cooney’s Previous Works:

“This remarkably talented author writes in a refined, understated prose.”

*The New York Times Book Review*

“A writer with style and heart.”

*O, The Oprah Magazine*

“Cooney’s rural New England is Americana at its finest...community life as we would like it to be.”

*San Francisco Chronicle*

Available September 15, 2013  
(See excerpt on page 7)

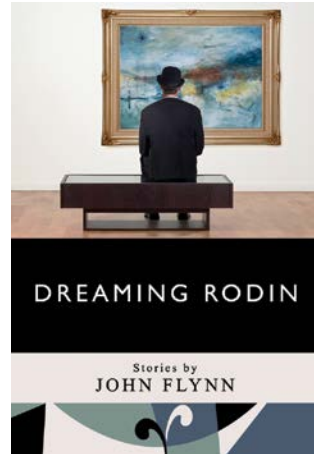
## Dreaming Rodin

by John Flynn

Thoughtful, hopeful, at times gritty and comical, this short story collection delights in examining the lives of humble characters in oddball yet everyday circumstances. There is an old-fashioned honesty in Flynn's work that reflects our common humanity. Flynn mirrors the commonplace, the foibles, and the struggles of individuals seeking ways to resolve inevitable crises and disturbances.

"Flynn is an author who pays attention to the details. With each story, I felt as though I'd moved into town and set up camp with his characters. Vivid and engaging, it's a pleasure to add this collection to my shelf."

**Kristen-Paige Madonia**  
Author, *Fingerprints of You*



Available September 15  
(See excerpt on page 9)

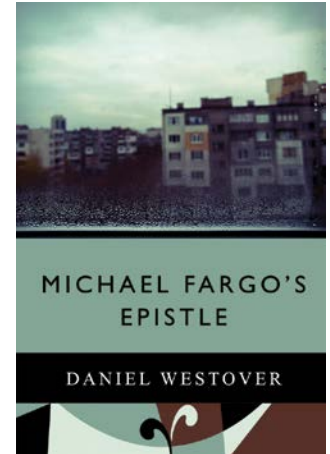
## Michael Fargo's Epistle

by Daniel Westover

Desperate to escape a series of mistakes and broken relationships, Michael Fargo joins the Mormon Church and accepts a missionary assignment to Bulgaria, a country with a storied past but a bankrupt present. Searching for penance in the shadows of derelict blocks and communist monuments, Michael embraces the sad beauty of Sofia, a broken city awash with corruption. But when he meets Katya, a woman whose abusive marriage disturbs the ghosts that are never far away, he discovers helping her will mean violating the ministry's strict rules and force him to confront the past he can no longer outrun.

"Through deeply glimpsed scenes and gospel-worthy prose, Westover's characters find their own stories amid the rubble-strewn narratives of Socialism and Mormonism."

**Adam Johnson, Pulitzer Prize-winning author, *The Orphan Master's Son***



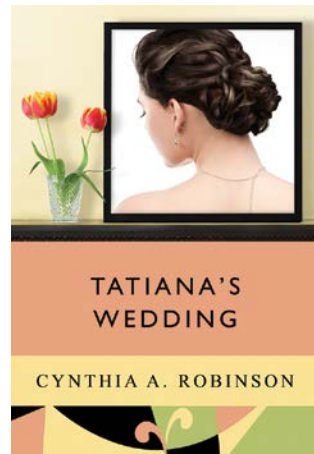
Available October 15, 2013  
(See excerpt on page 10)

## Tatiana's Wedding

by Cynthia A. Robinson

Middle-aged Delfina's life has been indelibly marked by her mother's violent death at the hands of Delfina's father when she was a young girl. Her grandmother's terminal illness occasions the sudden reappearance of her father, provoking a series of quietly shattering revelations that will permanently alter Delfina's perceptions of herself and others.

*Tatiana's Wedding* probes the intricate tensions and silences that underlie family relationships, tempering unflinching examinations of the scars left by violence and loss with subtle celebrations of compromise, forgiveness, and compassion.



Available October 15

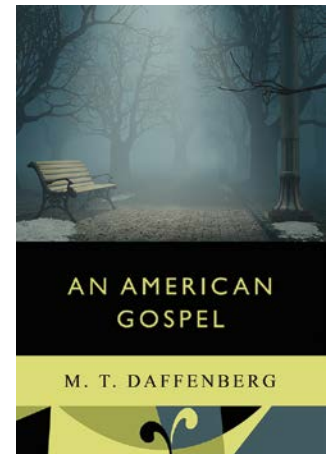
## An American Gospel

by M.T. Daffenberg

After serving his country and earning a philosophy degree, an Iraq war veteran struggles to support his family in recessionary America, pushing him closer and closer to the brink of suicide, when a murdered girl, cancer and a nursing home miracle come together as a message of hope.

"I think it really captures the essence of what it is like trying to get by during the 21st century Depression. The main character struggles with the reality of his life versus the dreams he holds onto so tightly. It is very well written, suspenseful at some turns and endearing at others. Should be required reading for every politician—they need to lead the way out of the morass."

**Amazon Review**



Available Now  
(See excerpt on page 8)

## Normal Family

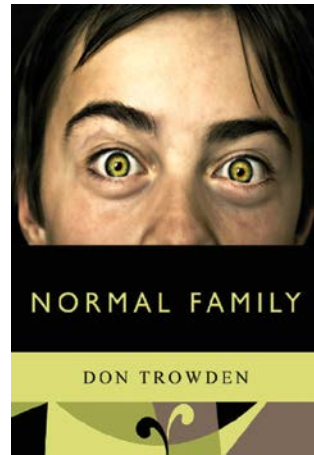
by Don Trowden

*Normal Family* is a wildly funny coming-of-age novel about a young boy's four consecutive holidays with his eccentric family. Over the course of Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, and Independence Day, our young hero, Henry Pendergast, comes to know his once-famous author (and now alcoholic) grandfather George, who sobers up long enough to help Henry come to terms with the mystery surrounding his mother's mental illness.

Henry somehow perseveres through a landmine of dysfunctional relatives amidst a family in decline, including siblings, parents, and step family, all set against the social chaos of late-1960s America.

"I loved this...often tragi-comic, not easy to do."

*Goodreads Review*



Available Now  
(See excerpt on page 9)

## Marriages are Made in India

by Lakshmi Raj Sharma

Escape to India with this delightful short story collection. Witty, fun, and full of the wonderful imagery of India, these stories are sure to entertain and inform readers looking to laugh and discover via the literary imagination of a master storyteller.

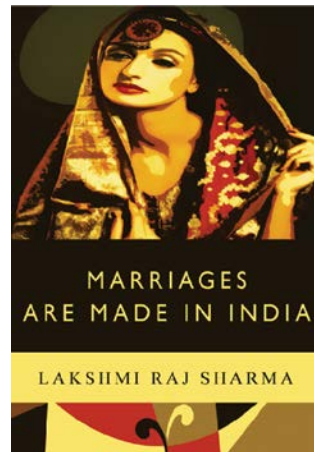
**Praise for the author's novel *The Tailor's Needle*(Penguin):**

"A comedy of manners laced with intrigue and excitement."

*The New Indian Express*

"The whole is held together by a gently mocking and yet ultimately compassionate narrative voice, which gives the reader a brief and enchanting glimpse into a world now gone, with all its faults—and all that might be loved in it, too."

Gis Hoyle



Available Now

## Dancing in the Kitchen

by Susan Sterling

*Dancing in the Kitchen* explores the unraveling of secrets in a New England family after the unexpected death of the father.

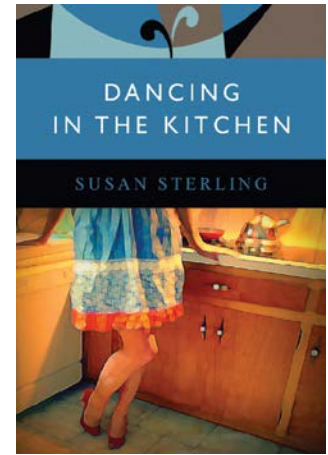
Returning to her childhood home in Three Rivers, Maine, two months after her father's death, Annie struggles to understand the past, certain that in its mysteries lie the answers to her present dilemma. An artist and the mother of a four-year-old daughter, she finds herself caught between a faltering marriage and an affair that has rekindled her long dormant passion for painting.

"What a smart elegant writer Susan Sterling is. *Dancing in the Kitchen*, her finely observed first novel, is a moving exploration of betrayal, not just of others but ourselves."

**Richard Russo, Pulitzer-Prize-Winning Novelist**

"Susan Sterling writes with the intelligence and psychological complexity of Virginia Woolf, and her characters will quickly take up residence in your mind."

**Helen Fremont, bestselling author *After Long Silence***



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(See excerpt on page 11)

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## Excerpt from *Thanksgiving* by Ellen Cooney

### 1941 Stuffing

Mabel Morley doesn't remember when she started calling her mother-in-law Emmie. Emily is such an Emily, it's like calling a chestnut a chessie, or a loaf of bread a loafie, an onion an unnie, a pan of giblets for broth a pannie of jibbies for brothie.

Mabel cannot believe it's up to her to make the stuffing and get it inside the turkey.

Definitely, the Emmie-not-Emily started before Mabel moved into the house, against a background of Morleys disapproving of her for *stealing Roger Junior and being so much younger than him, she looks like she's still in high school*.

Having started it, having made the gaffe, having blurted it out from nervousness, like, "I'm happy to finally meet you, Emmie," or, "I do take cream in my coffee, Emmie," she couldn't go back. It had to be Emmie for good.

She didn't steal Roger Morley.

Moving into the house was supposed to be temporary, until they saved up a down payment for a place of their own. But Mabel understands this is it for her. Roger and the other wife, the mistake one, had lived in an apartment in town. That marriage only lasted a few years. It came to a divorce around the same time Roger's younger sisters were setting off into lives of their own.

Emily had wanted to flip a coin to determine which daughter of hers would become the next Morley queen of the household. But they broke her heart by "turning their backs on their heritage," as Roger puts it. He doesn't get it that his sisters thought of the house as a nest to fly away from, like any normal bird. And the mistake-wife? Well, she'd flown too.

When Roger says things like "heritage," Mabel feels he's asking her to put a hand on her heart and recite the Pledge of Allegiance, or get ready for a quiz on who was who among the Morleys a hundred years ago, two hundred years ago, even three, when the first of them wobbled off their English boat, and the men who put themselves in charge of everything wore wigs in church like English judges, and if you weren't religious like they were, they hanged you.

## Excerpt from *An American Gospel* by M.T. Daffenberg

The darkness lurked about my mindless job as a clerk and I started getting high before work that fall to stave off those shadows, those black holes. My sense of moderation for pot was quickly leaving me. I smoked more and more. Soon, by December, I was bringing my bowl with me and smoking in the bathroom halfway through my shift. I won't lie; it made my crappy job utterly tolerable.

But I was setting myself up to fail one of those Draconian drug tests some places of employment now required. I knew plenty of incompetent people who never touched any sort of drug, and I knew highly competent people who smoked joints the way some smoked cigarettes.

So, if you're offering a low-wage, low-end position, don't waste your money on drug tests, just use your best judgment and hire the best person for the job. Aside from that, it truly is an encroachment of civility for someone to demand urine, or feces, or pubic hair, or saliva, or any bodily excretion from you just because you want to earn your keep. It's an unjust assumption of guilt and a lazy, ignorant way to evaluate a prospective employee. And it's just plain sick to ask someone for any of these things. Out of context, the request is even more absurd. *"I'd like to see this movie."* *"Ok, fill this cup with your pee and bring it back to me."* *He smiles when he takes your golden elixir.* *"Now wait over there, and if your piss is in a condition we approve of, you can go into the theater."*

Whom was I kidding, anyway? I couldn't even get an interview, a phone call, a sideways glance, let alone a prestigious enough minimum wage, brain-dead job offer that actually demanded a cup of my THC-laced piss. I liked imagining that the owners of piss-testing companies passed the samples around and sipped them ritually every time there was a new hire—the piss taste challenge.



## Excerpt from *Dreaming Rodin* by John Flynn

With her books, memories, discount coupons and annual memberships to under-funded over-politicized museums, she still felt like a spectator within society at large, disconnected and nomadic. She thought of herself as a frumpish dame who couldn't run a blender.

Was that so bad? She could no longer say.

There was a time when a Gainsborough waistline or a Titian robe carried her across seas to Europe. One day she'd take that tour, visit all those museums.

There was a time when capturing light within a grape launched her into rhapsody. A time of unmanageable exuberance, when it mattered whether she selected charcoal, oils, acrylic or ink.

Morning dew on a windowpane. Steam behind a neon sign. Every moment a door. Every fleck of light a collage. All the most important blessings in the world came down to describing her mind in a picture.

And now what?

## Excerpt from *Normal Family* by Don Trowden

"Are you going to be okay, Mom?"

"Don't worry, sweetie. All this holiday socializing is wearing on my nerves. Let's just get through the holiday season."

"Let me know if there's anything I can do to help," I offered.

"Thanks, dear. I just need to figure out what's wrong and then everything will be fine."

We stared silently ahead through the smoke-filled Plymouth station wagon when I realized too late that my mother was driving straight toward a row of lane divider cones. These cones were arranged in the pattern of flying geese, with one cone at the front, then a row of two, then another row of three and so on all the way back for nearly two hundred feet. The bright orange cones cordoned off a section of road being repaved. I'm not sure exactly what happened, but I think my mother just snapped. Instead of staying left with the other cars, she drove straight into the cones as though pulled by some mystical force. She plowed into the center formation, mowing the cones down in rapid succession.

"Mom, put on the brakes!" I panicked.

No response. She accelerated through the cones in a trance.

Out the window I saw the faces of last-minute shoppers observing us with a mixture of amusement and concern. Mom had knocked down most of the cones when we heard police sirens screaming up from behind. She snapped back to reality and guided the car off to the side of the road, gazing at me through vacant eyes. "Look, dear, I don't know what I just did, but when the officer comes up to the car start crying and maybe he'll let us go."

It wasn't difficult to produce fake tears.

## Excerpt from *Michael Fargo's Epistle* by Daniel Westover

Dear Mom:

Because "dear" is how you begin a letter and because none of the other names I've considered feels any better than "Mom," though you have to admit the words seem a little uncomfortable sitting so close together. Or maybe they don't anymore, not to you. Maybe that's the point of your letter. *I haven't been able to let go, and I realize now that I don't want to.* It's right in front of me, green ink on recycled paper. The handwriting is yours. But part of me still doesn't believe you. Because you did let go, didn't you? I crossed a line, and you were gone. You took back your maiden name and moved to the city. And on that last day at Half Moon, when I told you that yes, I was going to Bulgaria for two years, you told me it was over. I think we both know now that it's not that easy, that even if you've never held on as tightly as you should, it's not something you can just decide, to let go, to stop being a mother and a son. But it's what you said: *I need this to be over. I have to get over it.* And I could see that you meant it, that it's what you really wanted, to be Ruth—not Mrs. Fargo, not Mom—just Ruth. And how could I blame you, after what I'd done?

That's why I had to leave, do you see? You were gone, but you still filled every space of the house, and one way or the other, I needed it to be over, too. I know it must seem incredible to you, even now. *A Mormon* of all things. Part of me still doesn't believe it, either. Sometimes I'll catch my reflection in a cracked shop window along Slaveikov or a greasy pool in the pazaar, and I'll be shocked at the short hair, the white collar and tie. It's like when you fall asleep somewhere you've never been before and, in that first moment of waking, can't remember where you are, or how you got there. But it's more than that. It's like the broken image is looking back at me, too, and it's trying to decide if it knows me. And most times, if I'm honest, I think I know what it sees. Even in Bulgaria, where missionaries wear windbreakers and sweatshirts over their shirts and ties and forego the standard issue black nametags, there's no disguising myself.

But in another way, it isn't so hard to believe, is it? The Mormons offered me a way out. When they knocked at the door, I saw a chance for a new life. Maybe you won't understand why I took it, maybe you can't. That's in your letter, too: *I don't think I've ever known what you want.* And that's the reason for my letter, the one I'm finding it so hard to begin, even in my head. I've ignored your letters for months, but this time I want to answer. Part of me still thinks it's too much, that I can never cover it all, but I need to try. I need to get it outside of myself, to lay it all down and see it split and bruised and real. Maybe then, if I let myself believe you really do want to hear, I'll know how to answer for real.

Right now, though, smoke is filling the departures terminal, and it's hard to trust any of this. Sofia is like that. You breathe the gray and hazy cityscape until you become gray and hazy yourself. Time breaks down. Everything seems like a blurred impression of itself, and nothing, even faces you see every day, seems real. Don't get me wrong, I know the city. Every tram stop and alleyway. I could take you to each cracked socialist monument, all the public squares and derelict housing tenements, every pazaar and mafia chop-shop. But I've always been lost in Sofia. It's exactly how I felt the day I landed, eighteen months ago, and it's never left me. That was before the bank shutdowns and political marches, before the King came out of exile, sending thousands into rioting streets. It was before I'd taken a single punch from a skinhead, and it would be months before I even met Katya. But even with the businesses open, the airport had been like this: hazy, unknown, deserted. A ghost terminal. And the ghosts were mine. I'd brought them with me.

## Excerpt from *Dancing in the Kitchen* by Susan Sterling

Annie walked over to the sink and, still edgy from the long drive, stared out the window at the dark woods that stretched beyond the house toward the Connecticut River, and after that Vermont and the Green Mountains. She felt like an actress struggling to remember her lines in the revival of an old play.

Her thoughts drifted in and out of Tom's voice, which both belonged in this kitchen and was terribly wrong in it. Brian was speaking again about the shelter. Tom was talking about places to find used furniture. Why was he here? Whose idea was this, to have him come for supper? She guessed Brian's. It made sense it was Brian's.

She poured herself a glass of cider and returned to the table.

"I'll be in North Carolina," Tom was saying. "I'll help when I get back." He picked up one of the empty beer bottles, resting it in his palm as if he were about to juggle.

"When are you going?" Annie asked. He hadn't mentioned this trip.

"In two weeks."

"That's why I insisted he have supper with us tonight," Brian said. "We've hardly seen him all fall."

"We'd been hoping you'd get here," Tom added, giving her a sober look. "It's too dispiriting, men eating alone."

They didn't sound dispirited when she walked into the house, Annie thought. Before they knew she was there. But that was okay. It was, actually, almost like old times, the three of them sharing a meal in the kitchen.

Brian brought the stew pot over to the table and served them each a bowl. If Tom weren't here, she would have already told him about the meetings with Mr. Bloomingdale and how he and her mother talked forever about iris borers.

She wound one leg around the other, crossed and uncrossed them, painfully aware of their three bodies in the warm kitchen.

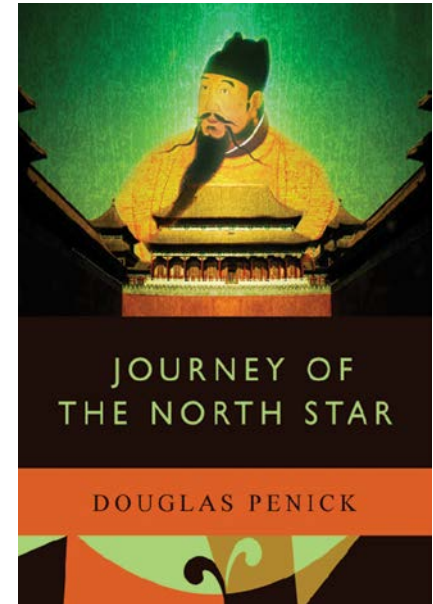


## Journey of the North Star

by Douglas J. Penick

This fascinating historical novel brings to life the Chinese court of Zhu Di, the Yong Le Emperor, who reigned from 1403-1424 and made China a world power.

The story is narrated by the fictional eunuch Ma Yun, who served in the emperor's court. Replete with military campaigns, religious ceremonies, and the philosophical foundation that informs the Emperor's decisions through times good and bad, *Journey of the North Star* will appeal to readers interested in Eastern religions, history, philosophy, and the political outlook that still influences China today.



"...with extraordinarily evocative details, moments of disarming poignancy, and an overall verisimilitude that suggests this might really be the found work of a devoted courtier. The reader is completely beguiled by this glimpse of a lost world."

*Publishers Weekly*

"I wasn't surprised that this book was a semi-finalist in last year's ABNA competition. Amazon reviewers described it as follows:

"Fascinating account of a barbarous tradition and the thousands of eunuchs who lived and worked in Imperial China. Really interesting portrait of a completely different world, value system, and time."

*Amazon Review*

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### Leap of Faith

by Richard Hardie

The Temporal Detective Agency's first case since relocating to the 21st century from Camelot involves the theft of the world's biggest diamond, the disappearance of Lord Nelson's statue from the center of London, and a battle against a gang of ship wreckers and smugglers based in the year 1734. With the help of Sir Galahad, the Agency faces death and defeat in their first real case when they meet the evil Black Knight and cliff where he kills his enemies.... called the Leap of Faith.

"*Leap of Faith* is billed as a YA title though anyone who enjoys a rip-roaring escapade, a sassy heroine, and plenty of humor, will love it!"

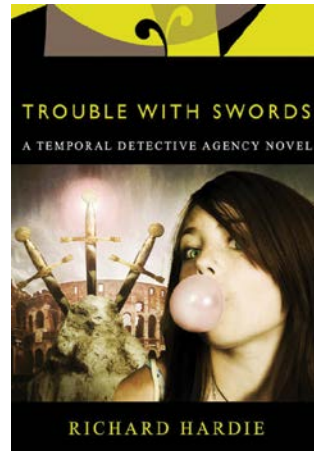
**M. Vincent-Northam, Author**



### Trouble with Swords

by Richard Hardie

Having defeated the Black Knight, recovered the Koh-i-noor diamond and gained two boyfriends, the Temporal Detective Agency needs a rest, but Merlin has other plans. Excalibur has been stolen and if it isn't recovered Arthur and Camelot will be obliterated. With the aid of their friends, as well as the dubious help of Shakespeare and three witches, Tertia and Unita face overwhelming odds as they tackle the case. Travelling through time to Rome and Egypt, they battle their enemy's magic and mayhem at the Roman Coliseum in a fight they must win, because History itself is at stake.



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