



Fiction/June 2020/ Paperback  
 ISBN: 978-0-299-32854-2  
 280 pages/6 x 9 inches/\$17.95

# HALF BY SHARON HARRIGAN

(University of Wisconsin Press, June 2020)

*“Half is mesmerizing, a bright and inventive novel like no other. I was swept away, pulled into the conspiracy that is twindom, with its exquisite sweetness and cruelty. The mystery that propels the story forward artfully reflects the mystery of twindom itself.”*

—Bonnie Jo Campbell, author of *Mothers Tell Your Daughters, Once Upon a River*, and *American Salvage* (National Book Award finalist)

What if two people were so close they shared everything? Paula and Artis are thirty-year-old identical twins who speak in one voice—until they can't anymore. Their father's sudden death threatens their uncanny bond. While growing up, they believed he possessed magical powers, but they also lived in fear of him. At his funeral, they retrace their early life—one year per chapter. Will they find their way back to each other, or finally discover the singularity of their true selves?

Written in spare, lyrical prose, *Half* is an achingly beautiful coming-of-age story, sprinkled with Greek mythology, magical realism, and murder mystery. In her thought-provoking debut novel, Sharon Harrigan gives voice to the complex relationships within families, showing how our fierce love for one another can also be the very thing that leads us to betrayal.

“Why does the sun rise every morning?” we asked.  
 We answered in a fake Mom voice: “Because your dad likes it that way.”  
 “Why does it get so cold every winter we freeze our butts off?”  
 “Because our butts are too big?”  
 “No. Because your dad likes it that way.”  
 “Why is the sky blue? Why does the devil have horns? Why does fire burn?”  
 “Because your dad likes it that way.”

—Sharon Harrigan, from *Half*

**Sharon Harrigan** is the author of *Playing with Dynamite: A Memoir* (Truman State University Press, 2017). Her new book *Half* was the finalist for the AWP Novel Prize, and her story upon which this novel is based won the Cecilia Joyce Johnson Award from Key West Seminars and the Kinder Award from *Pleides Magazine*. She has an MFA in Creative Writing from Pacific University and teaches writing at WriterHouse in Charlottesville, VA, where she lives with her husband and daughter.



Photo: Sara Cramer

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## **PRAISE FOR *HALF* BY SHARON HARRIGAN (University of Wisconsin Press, June 2020)**

"I love this novel. I couldn't put it down. I've never written those two sentences before, even about novels that have won major awards."

—**Jesse Lee Kercheval**, author of *Underground Women*

"At turns remarkably lovely and frighteningly odd, *Half*, by Sharon Harrigan, is as sweet as it is creepy and strange. The story is told from the plural perspective of twins, reminiscent of Justin Torres' *We the Animals*, with tension so organically built in that the very nature of the story, the style in which it's told, lends itself to a troubling dynamic, like the twins themselves. Twice the threat at every turn, *Half* is lyrical, imaginative, and smart. A little novel pulling off a very big feat."

—**Deborah Reed**, author of *The Days When Birds Come Back*

"Innovative and inventive, this novel does the impossible. It makes us believe two people can be so close they are virtually the same person. Harrigan's magic trick is so convincing that when the twins lose their bond, we feel ourselves being broken in half too."

—**Bret Anthony Johnston**, author of *Corpus Christi* and *Remember Me Like This*

"Told in a singular voice using the first person plural, from the point of view of twins, no less, *Half* could have been too clever by half. But it's a high-wire act of a novel, and manages to pull off the improbable. We feel for these twins, this We, and are enthralled by their unique story and by the cadence and humor and humanity of this daring, extraordinary novel."

—**Porter Shreve**, author of *The End of the Book*

"Sharon Harrigan's *Half* is the kind of story that lingers in the mind, haunting and unsettling, dark but redemptive, compelling in the way of the best fairy tales. I want to read it again and again to understand all of its rich layers."

—**Artis Henderson**, author of *Unremarried Widow*

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## **Praise for *PLAYING WITH DYNAMITE: A MEMOIR* (Truman State University Press, Oct. 2017)**

"This is the kind of memoir that will increase your emotional IQ, making you smarter about your own life and maybe even the familiar mystery of your own family."

—**LitReactor**

"A warm, engaging read about the ways in which memory distorts our understanding of family."

—**Kirkus Reviews**

"Intoxically relatable. Her story is our story too."

—**Cleaver Magazine**

"Definitely crafted and multilayered."

—**Midwest Book Review**