

PATRICIA HENLEY
author of HUMMINGBIRD HOUSE and IN THE RIVER SWEET



Other Heartbreaks

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This collection of elegant, moving stories explores the bonds and betrayals among women. Patricia Henley's characters make their way through grief and discovery, revealing the power of their hearts and of the landscapes where they reside.

Patricia Henley's first novel *Hummingbird House* was a finalist for the National Book Award. Her second novel *In the River Sweet* was named a Best Book of the Year by the *Chicago Tribune* and the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

Other Heartbreaks Details

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From Reader Review Other Heartbreaks for online ebook

Ampersand Books says

It's hard to believe Patricia Henley's stories aren't real, that the characters in Other Heartbreaks aren't out there keeping secrets, struggling to move on. Not much happens in these stories in the way of plot or traditional narrative arc; instead, the story emerges from the character's lives, the accumulation of many heartbreaks. If, as Henley says, the writing of short stories is a "humble activity," it's the humility of a family photo album, where each collection of faces means something, sometimes something deep and troubling. Read the rest of the review at The Collagist.

Gerry LaFemina says

Henley's stories engage characters on the precipice of loss even as she reminds us that redemption is just beyond such loss. In prose that is sharp and at times surprising, Other Heartbreaks reminds us of the power of the short story.

Sharla says

This was an interesting collection of short stories -- I just think that perhaps short stories aren't my particular favorite variety of reading material. I enjoy learning the depth of the characters and riding along with them for some duration of time. However, I did find many of the stories enjoyable and enlightening.

One line that resonated with me particularly, "James Hillman writes, in The Soul's Code, that sometimes men and women are drawn to each other to make a baby simply so that particular soul may come into being, not necessarily to be lifetime mates."

Virginia says

READ OF IT IN A MAGAZINE. SHORT STORIES OF VARIOUS LOSSES.

Stella says

Every story in this collection is heartbreaking. A common thread of sadness and longing is in every story, in every woman. It's easy to find something to relate to, to love, in each snippet of someone else's life.

Myfanwy says

It seems an oversimplification to say that Patricia Henley's gorgeous new short story collection, Other Heartbreaks, will break your heart. But it will. It will break your heart again and again but you will come

back to it, begging for more.

You will come back because this is what love it about. The thrill of attraction, the comfort of togetherness, the razor's edge of disintegration. Love is, in fact, a heartbreak the second it begins because within that second what you know, but do not dare voice or even allow yourself to think, is that someday love will end. Either you will stop loving or the other person will stop loving or, worst of all, one (or both) of you will die.

Patricia Henley knows all of these things about love and these are the gifts that she generously offers us with her stories. And she gives us these gifts with great skill, with great humor, and with a great deal of empathy. She is, in short, a master.

Usually there are one (or sometimes two) stories within a collection that I feel I must push myself through; not so here. Each story was as skillfully wrought and humane as the next. The book is perfectly bookended with two examinations of family's dealing with loss and.

The first story of the book, "Rocky Gap," totally knocked me out. The setting is a family reunion at a campground. Innocuous enough, or is it? What we all know about family is that usually when we come together as adults there are many past wounds lingering in the shadows. Same here for this family which is coming together for the first time since the death of one of the sisters. At the same time that the the protagonist is mourning for her lost sister, she is also mourning for the loss of her partner as she watches their relationship disintegrate. And yet, through all of this sadness, there is beauty. One sees a way forward. No matter what, June will survive.

The final stories are a tale in triptych of the March family, within which there is an examination of the parents falling in and falling out of love all leading to the heart of the story, the daughter, Sophie, who has lost her young husband to random violence. Indeed, it is within Sophie story that I found the echo from many of the other stories and that is the biggest heartbreak--the one of love lost too soon. I was reminded so keenly of Gabriel and Gretta in the final scene of "The Dead" where he knows that he can never (and could never) replace the love his wife has lost. It is the same for Sophie; while her heart is opening up again, it may never again be as open as it was with Luis. As it is for many of the other characters within "Other Heartbreaks"--they may be heartbroken but they are not broken. They are not dead. They live and as long as they live, there is hope.

Chris says

There are very few writers that write a complete collection of short stories that every single story WOWS me--but a the majority of these stories had that effect on me.

Not all of them fully resonated with me--as I am 29-year-old male reading about, mostly, 50 to 60-year-old women. That being said, it goes to show how wonderful Henley is, that she can still keep my attention and surprise me with the poetry of her prose.

For me, "Red Lily" makes this entire collection worth the read, but there are enough highs to soar over those few, minor lows.

Chrissy says

No surprise that a collection of short stories about heartbreaks would break my heart. I usually stay away from short story collections because I'm a fan of character development that very few writers can master within such a concise work. Patricia blends the past and present and the struggles that we all so realistically face when battling with ourselves and what our hearts want. Great read.

Jodi Paloni says

I reviewed this book at Contrary Magazine...

<http://contrarymagazine.com/2012/harn...>

Sara Habein says

Achingly authentic, most of the stories concern families coming together for an event, oftentimes a funeral or a wedding. The women are young and old, straight and not, and the men are just as tough and complicated. One doesn't always like them, but they remain interesting.

Other Heartbreaks is an excellent portrayal of the journeys we take to feel whole — the process we must recognize in order to do so. Henley's work is honest and resonant, and it is work to which I will return again.

(Full review appears at Glorified Love Letters.)

Sybil says

Fans of Patricia Henley's short stories and novels will not be disappointed with her latest, Other Heartbreaks. This stunning collection chronicles characters engaged in struggles with relationships, faith, friendship, and community. Henley's prose shines--there isn't a bad sentence in the whole collection. Her stories feel fresh, never overly plotted or predetermined, and many will surprise you with their compassion and honesty, in their redemptive power for the characters and the reader.

Amy says

This is a book of heartfelt, intricately detailed stories, with character you can reach out and touch and invite home with you for dinner. Loved it, especially "Sicilian Kisses" and "Emma Compartmentalizes in Ireland."

David says

I love how these stories are driven so much by the immense pasts the characters carry while trying to

struggle through their present. It makes for some wonderfully tightly-woven fiction. Very clean and moving, sharp and cold at the same time that it is compassionate and sympathetic. Really, there are too many layers to these characters to be explained and summarized in a review. Better to read the stories and see for yourself.

Becca says

This is one of those books like "Love Medicine" by Louise Erdrich that will have you reading and re-reading it once a year or more just to relive the emotions you felt the first time you read the book, fell in love or had your heart broken. Henley's writing style is amazing and consuming.

Deborah Ball says

As I wrote earlier, I remember why I rarely read short story collections.....the character development is a bit lacking and I just did not enjoy this. It will definitely be a donation to my library sale!
