



The Collector of Names: Stories

Patrick Hicks

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In his debut short story collection, poet and novelist Patrick Hicks reminds us of one such constant in all our lives—death. In these stories, most of which are set firmly in the heart of the country, the characters, all solid, well-meaning, hardworking people, are beset by tragedies both large and small, natural and unnatural. In the opening piece, “57 Gatwick,” which won the 2012 Glimmer Train Emerging Writer Fiction award, a terrorist bombing of a commercial airliner over the city of Duluth, Minnesota gives the town coroner a new task beyond the collection and identification of victims’ bodies, thus restoring hope to a shattered community. In “Burn Unit,” a lone, misanthropic woman who rescues stray and abused animals, in turn rescues her horribly burned niece from a neglectful family and a life of despair. An unpopular teenage girl discovers a hidden talent in the wake of a devastating storm in “Picasso and the Tornado.” In the “The Lazarus Bomb,” the crew of a B-17 bomber crew flying missions over Germany in WWII is suddenly imbued with the ability to give life rather than rain death. With gentle humor and deft, lyrical prose, this collection demonstrates that, despite these tragedies, unlooked-for miracles do occur.

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Charles Kinsella:

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