



Little Sinners, and Other Stories (Prairie Schooner Book Prize in Fiction)

Karen Brown

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Winner of the Prairie Schooner Book Prize in Fiction, Karen Brown's *Little Sinners, and Other Stories* features a sad, strange mosaic of women and men grappling with the loss and pain of everyday existence, people inhabiting a suburban landscape haunted by ghosts: a mother who leaps from a ridge, a mistress found at the bottom of the Connecticut River, a father who dresses in a pale blue-custom suit—and disappears. The dead leave behind postcards, houses, bottles of sherry, bones. They become local legends, their stories part of the characters' own: an expectant mother in an isolated cottage on Long Island Sound uncovers an unsettling secret in her backyard; a troubled housewife is lured to a dinner party by a teenage girl whose mother has vanished under mysterious circumstances; a woman and her lover swim the pools of their neighborhood under cover of darkness; a young heiress struggles with mortality and the abandonments in her past.

These stories capture the domestic world in all its blighted promise—a world where women's roles in housekeeping, marriage, childbirth, and sex have been all too well defined, and where the characters fashion, recklessly and passionately, their own methods of escape.



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