

Publication Date:
August 25, 2015

Contact: Joan Higgins
646-307-5557
joan.higgins@stmartins.com

"This cursed Irish-American clan will grab you by the brisket and not let go. Delicious reading!"--Gary Shteyngart, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Super Sad True Love Story*

THE HOLLOW GROUND

by Natalie S. Harnett

*Winner of the 2015 John Gardner Fiction Book Award &
The Appalachian Book of the Year Award.
Longlisted for the International Dublin Literary Award.*

"Brigid Howley is as unforgettable as Francie in "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn," and hands down this is the best novel of 2014."--*Providence Journal*

"Natalie S. Harnett's *The Hollow Ground* is a coming-of-age novel, a murder mystery, a family saga, and an American tragedy of an environmentally and economically devastated region. But most of all, it's a painful and powerful story of love and survival."--David Gates, Pulitzer Prize finalist and author of *The Wonders of the Invisible World*

"Brigid is no ordinary hard-luck heroine; her voice rings true, offering a matter-of-fact telling that never falls into self-pity or melodrama. Set against the 1960s Pennsylvania coal mine fires, this debut novel is a dark and rewarding read." -- *Library Journal*

"Harnett's deeply atmospheric historical novel of the harsh old mining life captures the despair of a family at the mercy of the earth's elements and their own worst impulses." --*Booklist*

Inspired by the real-life deadly coal mine fires in now-infamous Centralia, Pennsylvania, and the equally devastated town of Carbondale, **THE HOLLOW GROUND** by Natalie S. Harnett is an extraordinary debut novel with an atmospheric, voice-driven narrative and an indelible sense of place. Already being compared to *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*, this evocative story about family and the nature of love between a parent and child introduces a stunning and powerful new voice in literary fiction.

It's 1961, and underground mine fires continue to ravage the small Pennsylvania coal town of Centreach, where eleven-year-old Brigid Howley and her family live with her great-uncle's

wife, Auntie. Brigid's father, Adrian, has been out of work ever since being injured in a mining disaster that also killed his brother, Frank. The family attributes the tragedy to the "curse" laid upon this proud Irish-American clan generations earlier by a priest who ran afoul of the Molly Maguires, a secret society of Irish coal miners. Although the family takes a strange pleasure in the curse because they believe it's made them stronger, Auntie confides in Brigid that she believes the curse didn't come from an outside source, but from within their own hearts.

When the fires cause their backyard to collapse, killing Auntie, the family is forced to seek refuge with Brigid's estranged grandparents, the formidable Gram and the Black Lung stricken Gramp. Living with her mother-in-law is the last thing Brigid's mother, Dolores, wants to do as she still holds a grudge against the woman for breaking a promise years ago. And Adrian must once again confront the fact that Frank was his parents' favored son. As the mine fires continue to rumble under their feet, long held bitterness and hurt begin to erupt. While trying to keep peace within the family, Brigid finds a kindred spirit in new friend Marisol who introduces her to a happy distraction, the world of teenage boys. When Brigid and Marisol accompany the boys to a long abandoned bootleg mine shaft, Brigid makes a terrifying discovery that will prove more dangerous than anything the curse has produced so far.

Filled with compelling characters, rich prose, engrossing historical detail, and an extraordinary sense of time and place, **THE HOLLOW GROUND** is exquisitely crafted and tells an unforgettable story that is certain to move readers.

NATALIE S. HARNETT is an MFA graduate of Columbia University. Her writing has appeared in the *Chicago Quarterly Review*, *The New York Times*, *The Madison Review*, *The MacGuffin* and the *Irish Echo*. She has been awarded the John Gardner Fiction Book Award, an Edward Albee Fellowship, a Summer Literary Seminars Fellowship, and a Vermont Studio Center Writer's Grant. She was a finalist for the Mary McCarthy Prize, the Mid-List Press First Series Award for the Novel, the Glimmer Train Short Story Award for New Writers, and The Ray Bradbury Short Story Fellowship. She spent most of her childhood vacations visiting her grandfather's home in the Wayne County area of Pennsylvania, where she became familiar with the nearby city of Carbondale. This is her first novel. She lives on Long Island and Northeastern PA with her husband and child. Learn more at www.natalieharnett.com

"The Hollow Ground recalls nothing so much as the dark and powerful dramas of Eugene O'Neill."—Rebecca Newberger Goldstein, Whiting Writer's Award winner

THE HOLLOW GROUND

By Natalie S. Harnett

Thomas Dunne Books

Griffin Trade Paperback * Fiction * ISBN: 1-250-06775-3

Price: \$14.99 * 336 pages * On Sale: August 25, 2015

"A murder mystery, coming-of-age novel, and family saga all in one."—*San Diego Magazine*, "5 Books to Read This Month"

A *Library Journal's* Debuts with Buzz Selection

An *Irish Echo* Summer Reads Selection

"There's more than a hint of Eugene O'Neill in this atmospheric meditation on the legacy of a generational curse once pronounced by an Irish priest on a Pennsylvania mining community....an impressively nimble debut novel."—*Irish Central*

"A grand achievement, a story fierce in its honesty about family love and betrayal." —Maureen Howard, National Book Critics Circle Award winner

". . .the flap copy. . . compare[s] the novel's child narrator, Brigid Howley, to Scout Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and I have to say, Harnett earns the comparison. . . the most rounded, complete child narrator I've read in years."—*Novel Historian*

"Ultimately *The Hollow Ground* is an unflinching portrait of familial struggle and a timeless examination of the treacherous elements that can both strengthen and relentlessly violate a family's connection. At once contemplative and energetic, Harnett's debut is a provocative and eerie novel of suspense, intricacy, and profound feeling."—*Literary Inklings*, Notable New Releases

"I enjoyed *THE HOLLOW GROUND* and found it to be an entertaining, and thought-provoking, novel. Highly recommended to fans of literary fiction and even mysteries." —*Booking Mama*

"To say this novel is a page-turner is an understatement. . . . A must read for both fans of historical fiction and mystery, *The Hollow Ground* has an intensity that will continue to burn within me like the abandoned coal mines that played such an integral role in our nation's history. Highly, highly recommended." —*Jenn's Bookshelves*

"Filled with compelling characters, rich prose, engrossing historical detail, and an extraordinary sense of time and place, *THE HOLLOW GROUND* is exquisitely crafted and tells an unforgettable story that is certain to move readers." —*Books and Needlepoint*

"This is very much a coming of age novel in the traditional sense, with a fascinating historical backdrop." —*Paperblog*

"The story is atmospheric, character driven and beautifully captures this period." —*Caffeinated Book Reviewer*

"*The Hollow Ground* is a heartfelt story of survival and embodies a sense of hope as its guiding light." —*Feathered Quill Book Reviews*

“. . .a story of resilience well-told. In Brigid Howley, the desperation is consuming.” —The Free Lance-Star