BEACON PRESS  
 Boston, Massachusetts  
 www.beacon.org

Beacon Press books  
 are published under the auspices of  
 the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations.

© 1996 by Percival Everett  
 First Beacon Press edition published in 2003  
 Published by Beacon Press in 2024

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 Printed in the United States of America

27 26 25 24            8 7 6 5 4 3 2

This book is printed on acid-free paper that meets the uncoated paper  
 ANSI/NISO specifications for permanence as revised in 1992.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data  
 Everett, Percival L.  
 Watershed / Percival Everett.—1st Beacon Press ed.  
 p. cm.  
 ISBN 0-8070-1627-5 (acid-free paper)  
 1. Indians of North America—Treaties—Fiction. 2. African American  
 men—Fiction. 3. Water rights—Fiction. 4. Hydrologists—Fiction. 5.  
 Colorado—Fiction. I. Title.  
 PS3555.V34W36 2003  
 813'.54 dc21  
 2003003619

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LANDSCAPES EVOLVE SEQUENTIALLY

*except under extraordinary provocation, or in circumstances not at all to be apprehended, it is not probable that as many as five hundred Indian warriors will ever again be mustered at one point for a fight; and with the conflicting interests of the different tribes, and the occupation of the intervening country by advancing settlements, such an event as a general Indian war can never occur in the United States. (Edward Parmelee Smith, 1873)*

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My blood is my own and my name is Robert Hawks. I am sitting on a painted green wooden bench in a small Episcopal church on the northern edge of the Plata Indian Reservation, holding in my hands a Vietnam-era M-16, the butt of the weapon flat against the plank floor between my feet. There are seven other armed people sitting on the floor, backs against the paneled walls, or pacing and peering out the windows—stained and clear—at the armored personnel carrier some hundred yards away across the dirt and gravel parking lot, and at the pasture where two sad-looking bulls stand, their sides, black and gray, flat against the sky behind them. Out there, there are two hundred and fifty police—FBI, all clad in blue windbreakers with large gold letters, and National Guardsmen, looking like the soldiers they want to be. There is an FBI agent sitting in a chair opposite me; his hands are bound with yellow nylon cord; his mouth is ungagged; his feet are bare and rubbing