

Lavender Ink

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THE FRY PANS AREN'T SUFFICING

Stories by Peyton Burgess

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A couple returns to their decimated home, bank account fat with FEMA money but with an unspoken understanding that the return means the end of their relationship. Thus opens this collection of stories of people coming to terms with change, attempting to make sense of a series of disasters and losses or just their banal day-to-day existence, finally finding lives worth celebrating. Alienated, confused, naive, these characters and their stories, driven by Burgess's carefully honed and sympathetic style, intrigue and ultimately captivate the reader.

The Fry Pans Aren't Sufficing is funny, but this collection also defines an elemental loneliness. I know these people, their voices, their lives caught between earthy double-entendres in the fun-loving Crescent City. The hard-edged comedy of Burgess's narrative is shaped and honed, always merciful, and is peppered with dialogue that's reliable and masterfully executed. Personal and surreal, these poignant survival stories coax the reader into moments of shared feeling, into truth, reflection, and simple beauty.

—**Yusef Komunyakaa**, Pulitzer Prize winning author of *The Emperor of Water Clocks* and *The Chameleon Couch*

Peyton Burgess is an original—a gifted, entertaining, unprecedented original. These stories have style, heart, brains and a sense of humor, and I can't imagine a reader who wouldn't want to put this at the heart of the bookshelf. Just read it.

—**Darin Strauss**, National Book Award winning author of *Half a Life*

In these stories of physical and emotional dislocation, Peyton Burgess brings us one wonderfully blighted hero after another—hapless but not hopeless, pummeled by the ills of our society but lucid and funny and soldiering on. Burgess is a profoundly gifted writer who understands that for art to exist, there must be scars.

—**Elizabeth McKenzie**, author of *The Portable Veblen*

These stories will leave you in fits of laughter just as often as they'll break your heart. They'll seduce you, trick you, and leave you bewildered that you're just now discovering a talent like Burgess.

—**Grant Ginder**, author of *People We Hate at the Wedding*

Do people really want to be saved? Or do we love our lack? As we look for mothering in line at the post office or cook something humble with name brand equipment, are we preoccupied with re-shaping absence, battering and frying it over and over till insufficiency becomes the comfort food of our being? Our storyteller in *The Fry Pans Aren't Sufficing* thinks: "Mostly, I'm beginning to question my value." Indeed, the very deepest core of value is investigated in the midst of natural disaster, unfathomable personal loss, and systemic injustice in this collection of experientially accessible yet existentially confrontational stories. Burgess' casually sensual language and visceral relatability make lack all the more felt.

—**Monica McClure**, author of *Tender Data*

About the Author

Peyton Burgess was born in Richmond, Virginia, where, for fun, he skateboarded and fished, and, for money, he picked up golf balls at a local driving range. Inspired by the many visits to his grandparents in New Orleans, he moved there and received BA degrees in English and communications from Loyola. He worked as a reporter covering crime, courts, and culture for spans of time in New Orleans, Portland, Ore., and Key West. In 2009, he moved to New York City to earn an MFA in fiction from New York University. He now lives with his wife and son in New Orleans where he teaches composition and creative writing at Loyola and works in the Monroe Library. His writing has appeared in *Salon*, *Chicago Quarterly Review*, *Banango Street*, *Fiction Southeast*, and *Big Muddy*, among others.

About Lavender Ink and Diálogos

Lavender Ink is a literary publisher in New Orleans, founded in 1995 by current Director and Editor in Chief, Bill Lavender. It publishes exceptional works of poetry, fiction, nonfiction, and other genres including books of reference, poetry, prose, drama and—through its Diálogos imprint—literature in translation. Recent and coming releases include *Crossing: A Love Story*, the only novel by acclaimed German novelist Anna Seghers not yet translated into English; Pablo Medina's translation of Virgilio Piñera; *The Dunning Man* by Kevin Fortuna; *N.O. Lit: 200 Years of New Orleans Literature*, edited by Nancy Dixon; a new illustrated translation of the ribald Roman poet Catullus; and the latest novel by Moroccan cultural icon Youssef Amine Elalamy, *Nomad Love*, among many others. Forthcoming titles include *Les Jardiniers* by contemporary Parisian novelist Veronique Bizot.

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