

ADVANCE PRAISE FOR *GHOSTS OF WYOMING* BY ALYSON HAGY:

“Hagy explores the lonely state of the Equality State, with its literally and figuratively haunted inhabitants. Hagy has an ear for the locals and a feel for the vast lonely landscape, capturing modern issues like small ranchers’ struggles with wolves and environmentalists, and the small details of late nights in pickups and the gradual erosion of Wyoming’s landscape.”

—**PUBLISHERS WEEKLY**

“*Ghosts of Wyoming* is a fine example of honest, gritty fiction. Without flinching, it shows the reader the imperfections of a place and its history, and the rare places in the human heart.”

—**FOREWORD MAGAZINE**

“Alyson Hagy writes about the historic and contemporary ghosts of Wyoming as if she has lived there for two hundred years. . . . She inhabits each character completely, tells the hard and heartbreaking tales of their barely redeemed lives with compassion and clarity, in prose as lyric and arresting as the great state itself.”

—**PAM HOUSTON**

“We’re in luck again out west. Here’s another first-rate storyteller. Alyson Hagy knows our lingo, our lands and people, our heartbreaks and glories, and our tragedies and sustaining myths, and how each runs through the others. Read and enjoy. Hope for more.”

—**WILLIAM KITTREDGE**

“Sharp, mournful tales and dead-on yarns. Hagy knows Wyoming well, her stern weathers and defiant beauty and patient ruthlessness. She knows too how this land fashions and tests her ghosts, both living and long gone.”

—**JOY WILLIAMS**

“Anyone reading *Ghosts [of Wyoming]* . . . will recognize, on every page, a woman and a writer who knows where stories lie and how to tell them. They’ll find a woman gifted with a preponderance of odd and unfamiliar phrases, with metaphors that wild your mind and make a foreign place familiar.”

—**BETH KEPHART**

FROM THE AUTHOR:

I was raised on a farm in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. I have degrees from Williams College (BA, 1982) and the University of Michigan (MFA, 1985), but my childhood in rural Virginia made me who I am. One of my grandfathers was a preacher; the other was a blacksmith. I am the product of both bloodlines—the pulpit and the forge. I crave the solitude of the outdoors as much as I seek the blessing of small, struggling communities. I love to breathe fresh air. I love to watch men and women work, especially with their hands. I am drawn to the grace of large animals. I am fascinated by torrential weather. I have a son who has asked me for stories all of his life. I have a husband who taught me how to follow trout and migrating birds. I live in Wyoming where the landscape is beautiful, intricate, and for me, still a mystery.

GHOSTS OF WYOMING, February 2010, Fiction
192 pages, 5 ½ x 8 ¼, Paperback Original (978-1-55597-548-7), \$15.00

Graywolf Press is distributed to the trade by Farrar, Straus & Giroux

BETH KEPHART BOOKS

Sunday, November 8, 2009

Ghosts of Wyoming by Alyson Hagy

I don't have a photograph of Wyoming, for I've never been there. I don't have a picture of my friend Alyson Hagy, either, though she was here one evening for a Christmas-time meal, and I have in my head the rigor and intelligence of her stories; I have in my mind's eye an image of her studying the books on my shelves; I remember that I had a terrible migraine before she arrived and her presence cured me of it like a pill.



I write of Alyson Hagy on this blog—of her talents as a teacher and leader within the University of Wyoming, of her talent for friendship, too. But today I am writing to herald Alyson's sixth book, a collection of eight wildly specific and original short stories called *Ghosts of Wyoming*. I'm heralding her relentless drive to present the Wyoming she knows—its tricksters, equivocaters, promoters, miscreants, and scamps; its legends and tall tales; its bird-afflicted weather; its eye-grazing, heart-bruising beauty.

The stories here take many forms and live inside several eras. Bad is not always bad and good is not what it seems. A boy steals a pup. A man goes missing. A girl does wicked thievery with bones. A reverend out in the wilderness can't decide what should be trusted. A woman on the edge of hysteria decries the loss of a moth. Men talk—trainmen and oilmen, a near-scholar. Women love hard and return as ghosts. The sky is made of howl and chirp and “the lusty flute song of larks,” and “ravens...gliding with the confidence of the undiminished and unfed.”

“You know why people come here, Livvy,” one character observes. “They like how the mountains look. They like the wild creatures they see, the fantasy that we can change our lives.” I don't know for sure how long Alyson, raised on a farm in the Blue Ridge Mountains, has been making Laramie, Wyoming, her home. But anyone reading *Ghosts*, due out from Graywolf Press in February, will recognize, on every page, a woman and a writer who knows where stories lie and how to tell them. They'll find a woman gifted with a preponderance of odd and unfamiliar phrases, with metaphors that wild your mind and make a foreign place familiar.

I am blessed by many things in this life. One of those things is Alyson Hagy.

- Beth Kephart