



True North

By Jim Harrison

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True North By Jim Harrison

An epic tale that pits a son against the legacy of his family's desecration of the earth, and his own father's more personal violations, Jim Harrison's *True North* is a beautiful and moving novel that speaks to the territory in our hearts that calls us back to our roots.

The scion of a family of wealthy timber barons, David Burkett has grown up with a father who is a malevolent force and a mother made vague and numb by alcohol and pills. He and his sister Cynthia, a firecracker who scandalizes the family at fourteen by taking up with the son of their Finnish-Native American gardener, are mostly left to make their own way. As David comes to adulthood—often guided and enlightened by the unforgettable, intractable, courageous women he loves—he realizes he must come to terms with his forefathers' rapacious destruction of the woods of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, as well as the working people who made their wealth possible.

Jim Harrison has given us a family tragedy of betrayal, amends, and justice for the worst sins. *True North* is a bravura performance from one of our finest writers, accomplished with deep humanity, humor, and redemptive soul.

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True North By Jim Harrison Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

If the sins of the fathers are visited on the sons, what should a son do to provide moral recompense? In Harrison's earnest, initially riveting new novel, narrator David Burkett decides as a teenager in the 1960s that he must rectify the ecological damage done to his beloved Upper Peninsula area of Michigan by his rapacious timber baron ancestors. More immediately, he vows to tell the world about the rapes and abuses committed by his alcoholic father, a charismatic Yale graduate with an egregious sense of entitlement. After a foray into organized religion, David finds spiritual solace in the stark natural world, described by Harrison in soaring prose. Unable to sustain emotional connection with any woman other than his older sister, David has brief liaisons with four women, but he feels more pain over the death of his dog than of his marriage. Meanwhile, he spends decades working on a history of his despised family, only to realize that he is a dud as a writer. By this time, he's in his late 30s, a man who has never achieved maturity because his father hangs like an albatross around his neck. A master of surprise endings (*Dalva*, etc.), Harrison pulls off a bravura climax when David attempts to reconcile with his feckless father. By this time, though, the reader may have tired of the monochromatic narrative, composed mainly of David's anguished introspection and depressed dreams. Still, Harrison's tragic sense of history and his ironic insight into the depravities of human nature are as potent as ever and bring deeper meaning to his (eventually) redemptive tale.

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

"*True North*," says the *Boston Globe*, "has its moments," which sums up general reaction to this novel. Almost everyone found something to like, be it the passionate narration or the novel's strong sense of place. However, most reviewers also found serious flaws. While some praised Harrison's writing, a few pointed out its sloppiness. And nearly all were frustrated with the novel's structure, complaining that Harrison reveals key events too early and allows the story to founder as Burkett painstakingly searches his soul. Harrison has called American readers "grotesquely plot-oriented," and those who fit this description should avoid his newest novel. But for those who don't mind a long walk through the woods, there's *True North*.

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From [Booklist](#)

Harrison is a novelist of the North Woods. Frozen lakes, remote cabins, and beer-drinking buddies are the decor of his fiction. He writes with prose that is at once well muscled and delicate. His latest novel, set primarily in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, is the tale of a boy growing to manhood and hoping to be a conscientious human being once he arrives there. David Burkett comes from a long line of men who made considerable money ruining the forests and endangering the pristine ecology of the U.P. The novel begins as a delightful picaresque yarn. Accepting or at least understanding his family's past and, more specifically, his father's abusiveness is the overarching meaning of David's journey. But the chronology becomes too disjointed and confusing, and the underlying theme of the personal redressing of the sins of one's father remains *too* underlying, too diffusely explored, and fails to hold the plot elements together. David's trail to adulthood becomes a series of episodes, which, while rich in moments, never quite gels into a focused picture. Still, readers of literary fiction will certainly enjoy those beautifully told moments, and Harrison has a devoted following who will be requesting this new title. *Brad Hooper*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Rosa Johnson:

What do you in relation to book? It is not important together with you? Or just adding material when you want something to explain what yours problem? How about your extra time? Or are you busy person? If you don't have spare time to perform others business, it is give you a sense of feeling bored faster. And you have time? What did you do? Every individual has many questions above. They have to answer that question because just their can do this. It said that about publication. Book is familiar on every person. Yes, it is right. Because start from on pre-school until university need this True North to read.

Cheryl Thornton:

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