



From Our House: A Memoir

By Lee Martin

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From Our House: A Memoir By Lee Martin

From Our House is the luminous and uniquely American memoir of Lee Martin, born into a farming family the same year his father unexpectedly lost both hands. Lee's father, once known for "doing a good turn for his neighbors," changed that afternoon in the cornfields, becoming an embittered, hardened man. "All our lives have private truths," Martin writes, "and the truth about my father was that after his accident he brought a deep and abiding rage into our home. I knew his hooks as intimately as I ever knew anything about my father."

"How easily our bodies become us, our souls bound to the material, to the joy or grief or pain we feel through our skin," Martin muses. Ultimately it is his mother's quiet compassion that accounts for the grace that Lee and his father finally discover both within themselves and within their small family. Learning to live by the seasons and to fall asleep to the rumble of his father's tractor, braving snowstorms to sell hogs or to visit an ailing grandmother, playing basketball, listening to baseball games, and stealing records, Lee endures the anger and shame that haunt his family—yet grows up to tell his tale with rare beauty and remarkable forbearance.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Relentlessly honest, Martin's account of growing up with an abusive parent is wise and healing. In 1956, when the author was a year old, his father lost both hands in a mechanical corn-picker on their Illinois farm. That tragic accident transformed Roy Martin into a bitter man who harbored a deep, corrosive rage that he vented on his son in sadistic beatings. Generous and friendly with neighbors and relatives, Roy was a strict and hypercritical parent. Though father and son enjoyed small pleasures together, Martin remained timid and fearful that he would never measure up, and he desperately tried to love and connect with the father whom he frequently despised. He walked a tightrope between his father's brutality and the abiding compassion of his soft-spoken, gentle mother, a schoolteacher who "lacked the courage to confront my father's rage or to escape it." While Martin never calls his mother an enabler or his father an abuser, by age 16, years of family dysfunction had turned him into a shoplifter, burglar and arsonist, putting him close to "becoming ruined beyond return." Martin, whose story collection *The Least You Need to Know* (winner of the Mary McCarthy Prize for short fiction) explored troubled father-son relationships, taps directly into his own psychic pain in this understated memoir. Both his parents are now dead, yet this moving family album, suffused with forgiveness and reconciliation, binds up the wounds. (June) FYI: Martin teaches creative writing at the University of North Texas and edits the *American Literary Review*.

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From Library Journal

The author of a book of short stories (*The Least You Need To Know*), Martin has written a memoir to read slowly and savor. He is born to an older couple. His father has hooks instead of hands owing to a farm accident, and his elementary-school teacher mother has trouble disciplining her students and soon loses her job in their rural community. They move to a more urban locale so that she can continue to teach and bring in money but eventually return to the area of their farm and families. Martin's father feels shame and rage over losing his hands, and Martin, who lacks the athletic and mechanical skills his father once possessed, is embarrassed by his own and his parents' physical shortcomings. Over the course of the memoir, Martin shows how he and his father learn to overcome their shame and control their rage. The honest and straightforward description of their relationship and their obvious affection for each other completely involve the reader. Highly recommended for all libraries.

-Gina Kaiser, *Univ. of the Sciences, Philadelphia*

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Review

"Wise and healing."—*Publishers Weekly*
(*Publishers Weekly*)

"Martin has written a memoir to read slowly and savor. . . . Over the course of the memoir, Martin shows how he and his father learn to overcome their shame and control their rage. The honest and straightforward description of their relationship and their obvious affection for each other completely involve the reader. Highly recommended."—*Library Journal*
(*Library Journal*)

"A lyrical, finely wrought memoir of grief, pain, and joy."—*Chicago Tribune*
(*Chicago Tribune*)

“Martin’s memoir evokes the secrecy of family violence and the isolation of growing up in a rural community. . . . This is a touching and honest portrayal of family life, violence, disappointment, and coming of age.”—*Booklist*
(*Booklist*)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Arthur West:

Do you one among people who can't read satisfying if the sentence chained from the straightway, hold on guys this kind of aren't like that. This From Our House: A Memoir book is readable simply by you who hate the perfect word style. You will find the data here are arrange for enjoyable reading experience without leaving perhaps decrease the knowledge that want to provide to you. The writer associated with From Our House: A Memoir content conveys the thought easily to understand by a lot of people. The printed and e-book are not different in the articles but it just different such as it. So , do you even now thinking From Our House: A Memoir is not loveable to be your top list reading book?

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Jason Davis:

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already do that. So , this is certainly good reading book. Hey Mr. and Mrs. occupied do you still doubt which?

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