



## The Girl Who Fell From the Sky

Winner of the Bellwether Prize for Fiction

By Heidi W. Durrow

“An unforgettable novel . . . that engages the heart.” Whitney Otto

“A remarkable novel [that] unfolds its secrets with the perfect placement of a mystery.” Joan Silber

“Echoes of the early Toni Morrison . . . one of the most convincing, original, and moving novels in the distinguished canon of American interracial literature.” George Hutchinson

“As exquisitely written as a poem . . . An achingly powerful exploration of family, love and race, from a brilliantly talented author.” Caroline Leavitt

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This debut novel tells the story of Rachel, the daughter of a Danish mother and a black G.I. who becomes the sole survivor of a family tragedy.

With her strict African American grandmother as her new guardian, Rachel moves to a mostly black community, where her light brown skin, blue eyes, and beauty bring mixed attention her way. Growing up in the 1980s, she learns to swallow her overwhelming grief and confronts her identity as a biracial young woman in a world that wants to see her as either black or white.

Meanwhile, a mystery unfolds, revealing the terrible truth about Rachel’s last morning on a Chicago rooftop. Interwoven are the voices of Jamie, a neighborhood boy who witnessed the events, and Laronne, a friend of Rachel’s mother. Inspired by a true story of a mother’s twisted love, *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky* reveals an unfathomable past and explores issues of identity at a time when many people are asking “Must race confine us and define us?”

In the tradition of Jamaica Kincaid's *Annie John* and Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, here is a portrait of a young girl--and society's ideas of race, class, and beauty. It is a winner of the *Bellwether Prize* for best fiction manuscript addressing issues of social justice.

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**Heidi W. Durrow** is a graduate of *Stanford*, *Columbia’s Graduate School of Journalism* and *Yale Law School*. She is the recipient of a *Fellowship in Fiction* from the *New York Foundation for the Arts*, a *Jerome Foundation Fellowship for Emerging Writers*, a *Jentel Foundation Residency*, and won top honors in the *Lorian Hemingway Short Story Competition* and the *Chapter One Fiction Contest*. She has received grants from the *Elizabeth George Foundation*, the *American Scandinavian Foundation*, the *Roth Endowment* and the *American Antiquarian Society*. Originally from Portland, Oregon, Heidi has worked as a corporate litigator at *Cravath, Swaine & Moore*, and as a consultant to the *National Football League* and *National Basketball Association*. She is the co-host of the award-winning weekly podcast *Mixed Chicks Chat*, and co-founder of the *Mixed Roots Film & Literary Festival*. Her writing has appeared in *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *The Literary Review*, *Callaloo*, and *Essence*.



“Fiction has a unique capacity to bring difficult issues to a broad readership on a personal level, creating empathy in a reader’s heart for the theoretical stranger. Its capacity for invoking moral and social responsibility is enormous. Throughout history, every movement toward a more peaceful and humane world has begun with those who imagined the possibilities. The *Bellwether Prize* seeks to support the imagination of humane possibilities.” Barbara Kingsolver

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For more information visit: [www.heidiwdurrow.com](http://www.heidiwdurrow.com).

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