



“A remarkable novel . . . Its core story about a mother’s desperate act recalls the insights of a writer no less than Toni Morrison. Durrow writes fearlessly about race, family, and memory—she is a writer to watch.”

—**JOAN SILBER**, author of *The Size of the World*

Dear Editor/Producer:

Algonquin is thrilled to be publishing the new winner of the Bellwether Prize, the \$25,000 publication award founded by Barbara Kingsolver to recognize fiction that addresses issues of social justice—Heidi W. Durrow’s powerful debut novel, ***THE GIRL WHO FELL FROM THE SKY*** (publication date: **February 16, 2010**).

You may remember that Algonquin published the last winner of the biennial prize, Hillary Jordan’s debut novel, *Mudbound*, which went on to become a *New York Times* bestseller, with sales of over 100,000 copies to date. *Mudbound* received widespread media attention, including *USA Today*, *People*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, NPR’s *Morning Edition*, and much more.

THE GIRL WHO FELL FROM THE SKY, a poignant and haunting coming-of-age story set in the 1980s, explores biracial and bicultural identity. Inspired by true events, its heart-wrenching narrative and emotional honesty have already earned raves from many writers, including Kingsolver, Hettie Jones, Jay Parini, Joan Silber, Whitney Otto, George Hutchinson, and Susan Straight.

A graduate of Stanford University, Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism, and Yale Law School, Heidi W. Durrow has won the Lorian Hemingway Short Story competition, the Chapter One Fiction Competition, and the Lois Roth Endowment Award. She has received grants from the New York Foundation for the Arts and the American Scandinavian Foundation, and a Fellowship for Emerging Writers from the Jerome Foundation. She is cofounder and coproducer of the Mixed Roots Film and Literary Festival. Her Web site is www.heididurrow.com.

If you’d like more information, contact me at **919-967-0108 x14** or **michael@algonquin.com**

Best wishes,

Michael Taeckens
Publicity Director

Praise for *THE GIRL WHO FELL FROM THE SKY*



“A breathless telling of a tale we’ve never heard before. Haunting and lovely, pitch-perfect, this book could not be more timely.” —BARBARA KINGSOLVER

“*The Girl Who Fell from the Sky* can actually fly . . . Its energy comes from its vividly realized characters, from how they perceive one another. Durrow has a terrific ear for dialogue, an ability to summon a wealth of hopes and fears in a single line.”

—*New York Times Book Review*

“[An] affecting, exquisite debut novel . . . Durrow’s powerful novel is poised to find a place among classic stories of the American experience.” —*Miami Herald*

“Durrow has written a story that is quite literally breathtaking. There were times when I found myself gasping out loud . . . I was pulled along each step of the way, wanting to know more.” —*Elle*

“An auspicious debut . . . [Durrow] has crafted a modern story about identity and survival.” —*Washington Post*

“A heartbreaking debut . . . Keeps the reader in thrall.” —*Boston Globe*

“Hauntingly beautiful prose . . . Exquisitely told . . . Rachel’s tale has the potential of becoming seared in your memory.” —*Dallas Morning News*

“Rachel’s voice resonated in my reading mind in much the same way as did that of the young protagonist of *The House on Mango Street*. There’s an achingly honest quality to it; both wise and naive, it makes you want to step between the pages to lend comfort.” —*NPR’s Morning Edition*

“A complex, serious novel of interracial life in America . . . Both gripping and instructive reading.” —*Minneapolis Star Tribune*

“[A] stunning first novel . . . What makes Durrow’s novel soar is her masterful sense of voice, her assured, nuanced handling of complex racial issues—and her heart.” —*Christian Science Monitor*

“Simply put, Durrow has written a beautiful novel . . . I simply hope it will be widely read.” —*Oregonian*

“*The Girl Who Fell from the Sky* is that rare thing: a post-postmodern novel with heart that weaves a circle of stories about race and self-discovery into a tense and sometimes terrifying whole.” —*Ms. magazine*

“A poignant story of biracial identity.” —*Charleston Post & Courier*

“There’s a poetry to these characters that draws you into their lives, making for a beautiful and earnest coming-of-age novel.” —*Louisville Courier-Journal*

“*Sky* is a time-fractured mystery told by a cast of rotating narrators . . . A successful first novel in the vein of *The Lovely Bones* or *Getting Mother’s Body*.” —*The Stranger*

“A layered narrative that weaves themes of race, class, and beauty into a page-turning plot.” —*The Rumpus*

“Durrow skillfully weaves together several points of view and different periods in time to construct her semi-autobiographical tale . . . Durrow manages it beautifully . . . Elegantly structured prose.” —*NAACP’s The Crisis magazine*

“Well worth the read. When one considers that Durrow has achieved with her first novel something reminiscent of Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*, or even her masterpiece *Beloved*, then *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky* soars to the height of a novel not to be missed.” —*Bookslut*

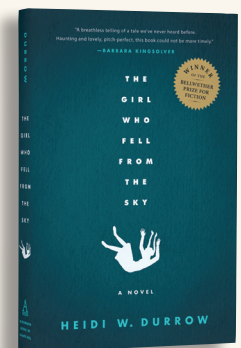
“There’s a poetry to these characters that draws you into their lives, making for a beautiful and earnest coming-of-age novel that speaks as eloquently to teens as it does to adults.” —*Amazon.com, Best Book of the Month selection, February 2010*

“A striking cast of characters . . . [An] insightful family saga of the toxicity of racism and the forging of the self . . . Durrow brings piercing authenticity to this provocative tale, winner of the Bellwether Prize for Fiction.” —*Booklist, starred review*

“Taut prose, a controversial conclusion and the thoughtful reflection on racism and racial identity resonate without treading into political or even overtly specific agenda waters, as the story succeeds as both a modern coming-of-age and relevant social commentary.” —*Publishers Weekly*

“A grim, penetratingly observed story of a half-black teen and her struggles with racial identity in 1980s America . . . [Durrow] examines familiar issues of racial identity and racism with a subtle and unflinching eye.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*



Publication Date: **FEBRUARY 16, 2010**

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ALGONQUIN BOOKS

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A COMPELLING AND POIGNANT DEBUT NOVEL ABOUT BIRACIAL IDENTITY

Winner of the 2008 Bellwether Prize for best fiction manuscript
addressing issues of social justice.

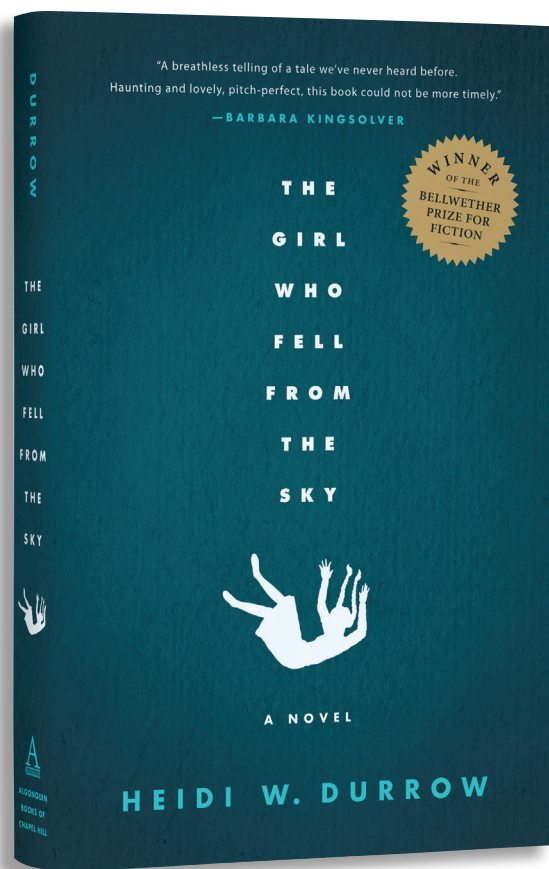
"When I first envisioned the Bellwether Prize, I imagined all the best qualities of fiction: vivid language, compelling characters, and clear moral vision. Novels just like this one, Heidi Durrow's breathless telling of a tale we've never heard before. Haunting and lovely, pitch-perfect, this book could not be more timely."—BARBARA KINGSOLVER



Inspired by a real event, 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 after a fateful morning on their Chicago rooftop.

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.

In the tradition of Jamaica Kincaid's *Annie John* and Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky* is a moving portrait of a young girl—and society's ideas of race, class, and beauty.



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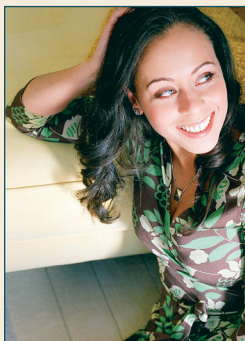
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A graduate of Stanford University, Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, and Yale Law School, **HEIDI W. DURROW** has won the Lorian Hemingway Short Story Competition and the Chapter One Fiction Competition, and was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. She has received grants from the New York Foundation for the Arts, the American Scandinavian Foundation, and the Lois Roth Endowment and a Fellowship for Emerging Writers from the Jerome Foundation. She is cofounder and coproducer of the Mixed Roots Film and Literary Festival. Her Web site is www.heididurrow.com.

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