The Mighty Currawongs

Fiction by
Brian Doyle

Both intimate and irreverent, the *Mighty Currawongs* taps into the small truths of what makes a life worth living—from the oddly hilarious to the cherished and pure.

A collection of headlong tales by Oregon author Brian Doyle—exploring such riveting and peculiar topics as chess in the Levant, tailors who specialize in holes, how to report stigmata to your attending physician, the intense hilarity of basketball, how to have a bitter verbal marital fight in your car, an all-Chinese football team in Australia, soccer and Catholicism, what it’s like to be in a ska band, a singing Korean baker, an archbishop who loses his faith between the salad and the entrée, genius Girl Scouts who save a radio station, and a baby born from a lake in Illinois. And some other fascinating stories. Really. Trust us.

Praise for *Title*

“Delightful. . . . A nimble and very funny collection of stories from a writer who clearly values the human condition in all its myriad forms.”

—Kirkus Reviews

With headlong good humor, Brian Doyle—one of America's finest novelists and catchers of brief true stories—now sings short stories in which a cast of oddball searchers and appealing lost souls challenges tradition and skewers pomposity at every turn, from the concrete courts of pick-up basketball to within the Catholic Church that Doyle so clearly loves. And that's only what the book is about . . . Its overarching appeal rises from the richly imagined and beautifully scaped trail of words. Brian Doyle here is a big-hearted, sharp-eyed, penetrating storyteller at the very top of his game.”

—Robin Cody, winner of the Oregon Book Award for *Voyage of a Summer Sun*

Biographical Note

Brian Doyle is the editor of *Portland Magazine* at the University of Portland, in Oregon. He is the author of many books of essays, “proems,” and fiction, among them *Bin Laden’s Bald Spot* (Red Hen Press, 2011). Among honors for his work are the Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts & Letters and the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association Award.
At the end of the summer of their eighteenth year the girl went west to college and the boy east, and they parted gently, for each by then knew the face of the future; the Catholic doctor’s son became a priest, charging like a fullback at pain and despair ten months a year, and vanishing into the northern mountains every summer to drink of the waters of the One; The Lutheran minister’s daughter became a teacher, and her village in the mountains near Canada built her a schoolhouse of cedar and pine, set against hills where hunters occasionally saw wolverine and the last of the great bears for which the town was named. Every summer she went home for two months and walked with her mother by the river, and sat with her father in his study, and sang in the streets with her nieces and nephews, and read letters from and wrote letters to the doctor’s son, letters composed only of the notes of songs, or drawings of fish and ferns, or maps of the patient stars. If we can use the word love in its largest and most wonderful sense, that being a generous tent so incredibly capacious that we cannot see or feel or conceive any limitation to it, one of the words we used for this tent being God, then we can say that she loved the Catholic doctor’s son with every fiber of he being, and he loved her; and as the years went on they loved each other more, for while the world saw a love without the salt and swing of their bodies, they felt a love that deepened and expanded in ways they had never imagined possible. Some years they never exchanged a word at all, but sent each other the smallest of gifts, each eloquent and miraculous: a feather that fell into his hand, a pebble given to her by a child, the worn wooden prayer beads that his father carried on his rounds. When each of them heard the crunch of the postman’s boots on the gravel leading to their doors, their hearts leapt; and both postmen came to realize their mailbags were filled with prayers beyond calculation or measurement.