Raffi left more than Rome behind. Snipped by a bishop as a boy, he is bundled off to America when the Church takes shame. Forbidden to use his voice, he explores other gifts that steal him into the society of Boston’s gangsters, necromancers, and the wild crew surrounding the poet Amy Lowell as he searches for a genuine love song. What E. L. Doctorow’s *Ragtime* did for New York, *The Boston Castrato* does for 1920s Boston.

In exuberant and yet precise prose, Colin Sargent conjures a sweeping tale of love, murder, and revenge.

- Christina Baker Kline, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Orphan Train*

Wicked shards of humor and sophisticated, astonishing word play reminiscent of James Joyce’s *Ulysses* make up the heart of this incandescent novel by Colin Sargent. A rare book, one that will settle into the soul for a lifetime.

- Morgan Callan Rogers, author, *Red Ruby Heart in a Cold Blue Sea*
We’d been playing pretend for almost a year and he still wouldn’t go back to his life. Meade wouldn’t acknowledge he had another life at all, though he’d bring me into it in ways, mentioning how Cole seemed to like me, driving me by the horse farm where he and Cole and his wife had lived before the great domestic unraveling commenced and she moved out to Deer Isle. Testing, I suppose, fantasizing—feeling at the edges to see how I might be assimilated into his greater life.

It was Saturday before my shift at the hospital. Meade was cleaning out my apartment cabinets and making lists of domestic goods he thought I needed. I found his possessiveness comforting, though I admitted that to no one.

He said, “You need paper towels.”

I said, “You have a wife who may or may not actually want a divorce.”

He touched his ear with his thumb, just the quickest gesture. I prided myself on being able to recognize his myriad ticks. He could have been brushing away a fruit fly, for whatever I didn’t have, I had fruit flies. We’d tossed out all the produce weeks ago, and the flies still rose from the dark when we opened any drawer in the kitchen. A friend said to fill a mason jar an inch full with vinegar then make a funnel from a sheet of paper and slide the funnel into the jar. This paper chute was supposed to steer the flies to an acidic death. We filled the jar and it sat on the counter for a week next to a piece of plain white paper. Neither of us seemed able to roll and insert the killing device.

Meade said, “You also need aluminum foil. Then we could save leftovers when we cook.”

It happened like that a lot—something I needed subtly moved into something for both of us.

“And a son,” I said. “You have a maybe wife and a son.”

“New dishtowels, too,” he said.

“Meade,” I said. The room was too quiet. I wished fruit flies made noise, like the blood-sluggish horse flies Meade had pointed out when he drove me to his horse ranch out beyond Lincolnville because he wanted to show me where he’d come from and where he still was. “Where I’ll probably always be,” he said and ground a cigarette out in the gravel, going quiet under his moment of self-pity. “People see the ocean and think sailing and lobsters are all we’ve got. Truth is the midcoast has produced some damn fine race horses throughout history.” The wind moved across the land and rapped gravel against the fenders. I tried to imagine race horses charging around these rolling pastures overlooking the sea. I don’t think Meade had anything in mind but to show me that road and that house and let me feel that wind and see those rocky pastures after months meshed together on my floor and in my bed. Cole would be getting out of school soon. He was the first one picked up in the mornings and the last one dropped off in the afternoons, and the bus ride home was exactly one hour long. That was one of about five facts Cole had shared with me the one time we’d met. Meade had called me at work and said, “Come to the Irving up the highway for lunch. I got a surprise.” The surprise turned out to be an eleven year old boy, shaggy blond hair squirting out from below a Portland Sea Dogs cap, drinking a Cherry Coke through a straw, and looking very little like his father, the man who was oblivious to the cruelty of such a surprise and whose face and body I knew too well—the small brown eyes edged at their corners with crow’s feet, the acne scars along his shoulders, the ankle he’d dislocated twice being tripped up on lobster boats and which popped when he stood after sitting for too long, the huge horse-halter calloused hands, the penis which he was self-conscious of and felt was small and was kind of small but didn’t mat-
Maine Woolens was founded in 2009. Our flagship store in Freeport offers finely woven blankets and throws in cotton and wools that are made in our Brunswick, Maine mill. We weave with the best American fibers available including combed cotton, Supima cotton and Merino wools. We feel the quality of our Maine-made products are second to none.

Maine Woolens Freeport Store
124 Main Street, Freeport, ME 04032 • Phone: 207-865-0755
Hours: 10-6 Daily • mwstore@mainewoolens.com

Greg Brown’s fiction has appeared in Shenandoah Literary, Epoch Magazine, and Narrative Magazine. A graduate of the Iowa Writers’ Workshop, he lives in western Maine with his daughter and his partner and is working on a novel about family mythology, native land and river rights, and a territorial lobstering feud.
**VISIT THE STORE**
• Freshwater & Saltwater Fish
• Coral • Reef Tank
• Unique Rain Forest Pond
• Aquatic Plants

**CONSULTATION**
Aquarium Science Graduates on Staff
• Freshwater Specialist
• Saltwater Specialist

**INSTALLATION**
We have all the tools & materials to set up the perfect aquarium in your home or office.

**MAINTENANCE**
• Cleaning services available!
• Water quality testing
• Leave the pet-sitting to us!
• Moving services
• Tank filling

(207) 887-4141 • easy-aquariums.com
Mon-Sat 10am-7pm Sun 11am-4pm
Questions: info@easy-aquariums.com
664 Main St., Gorham

---

**Unique, Quality Toys & Games for All Ages**
Offering a wide selection that is constantly being updated and changed — puzzles, books, puppets, games and toys for both indoors and outdoors.

28 Main St., Cornish • 207-625-3322 • atonceallagog.com

---

**W. CONROY-TULLY WALKER**
**FUNERAL HOMES & CREMATION SERVICES**
Greater Portland’s Preferred Funeral Homes
Committed to providing valuable and personalized burial, cremation, and prearrangement services.

773-6511 • conroytullywalker.com
172 State Street, Portland • 1024 Broadway, South Portland

---

**Create your very own design statement**
Not ready to build new, or take on a major renovation? Our Kitchen Design Specialists are ready to transform your kitchen with high quality, feature packed cabinetry sure to complement your personality and budget.

Our Kitchen, Bath & Flooring Centers feature 17 of the finest nationally known brands of cabinetry available. We also supply countertops made of granite, Corian®, Silestone®, Formica®, WilsonArt®, and more! Visit us today.

Kitchen Bath & Flooring Center
A division of Hammond Lumber Company
Toll-free 1-866-HAMMOND
hammond lumber.com

AUBURN • BANGOR • BELGRADE • BOOTHBAY HARBOR • BRUNSWICK • Damariscotta • FAIRFIELD • FARMINGTON • GREENVILLE • PEMAQUID • PORTLAND • SKOWHEGAN • WILTON

---

Visit us for updates on new merchandise, promotions and events!
Open Mon, Weds, Thurs, Sat 10-6, Fri 10-8, Sun 10-4

---

OCTOBER 2016 103