



# After the Parade: A Novel

*Lori Ostlund*

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The debut novel from award-winning author Lori Ostlund—“smart, resonant, and imbued with beauty” (*Publishers Weekly*) that “provides considerable pleasure and emotional power” (*The New York Times Book Review*)—about a man who leaves his longtime partner in New Mexico for a tragicomic road trip deep into the mysteries of his own Midwestern childhood.

Sensitive, bighearted, and achingly self-conscious, forty-year-old Aaron Englund long ago escaped the confinements of his Midwestern hometown, but he still feels like an outcast. After twenty years under the Pygmalion-like care of his older partner, Walter, Aaron at last decides it is time to take control of his own fate. But soon after establishing himself in San Francisco, Aaron sees that real freedom will not come until he has made peace with his memories of Mortonville, Minnesota: a cramped town whose four hundred souls form a constellation of Aaron’s childhood heartbreaks and hopes.

After Aaron’s father died in the town parade, it was the larger-than life misfits of his childhood who helped Aaron find his place in a world hostile to difference. But Aaron’s sense of rejection runs deep: when Aaron was seventeen, Dolores—his loving yet selfish and enigmatic mother—vanished one night. And when, all these years later, a new friend in San Francisco offers Aaron a way to locate his mother, his past and present collide, forcing Aaron to rethink his place in the world.

“Touching and often hilarious...Ostlund writes with acuity and refreshing honesty about the messy complexity of being a social animal in today’s world...” (*Booklist*, starred review). “Everything here aches, from the lucid prose to the sensitively treated characters to their beautiful and heartbreaking stories...An example of realism in its most potent iteration: not a nearly arranged plot orchestrated by an authorial god but an authentic, empathetic representation of life as it truly is” (*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review). *After the Parade* is a glorious anthem for the outsider.

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