*Sonata in Wax*

Edward Hamlin ISBN: tk

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Editorial Highlights

Original Publisher: Green City Books

**Keynote:**

A musical mystery whose twin story lines, spanning three generations and two continents, braid together a search for the origins of a century-old, inexplicably modern piano sonata and a family origin story with compelling mysteries of its own. At the center of it all is a lie—and a dangerous quest to find a way to tell the truth..

**Description:**

Ben is an acclaimed music producer at an eminent recording studio in Chicago, whose client list is a Who’s Who of the classical music world. He falls under the spell of a breathtakingly original, unidentified piano piece that survives only in the form of five heavily damaged wax recording cylinders. The music is stunningly avant-garde, with jazz elements that are all but inexplicable given its era. Ben can’t make sense of it—nor can he identify the composer or the astounding pianist. The sonata becomes his obsession.

Juxtaposed to this contemporary conundrum is a story of the sonata’s creation, set one hundred years earlier in WW1-era Boston and Paris, centering on a young Frenchwoman who is making her way up the Boston social ladder thanks to a friendship with a young American heiress. But when the World War comes, bringing with it the sudden death of her beloved father, a gifted classical pianist and classmate of Debussy’s, her fortunes are radically changed in a matter of days. The subsequent decisions she makes will reverberate up through the decades and finally reach Ben, who manages pulls the two storylines together into a surprising and gripping climax.

**Author’s Previous work**

*Night in Erg Chebbi and Other Stories* (Iowa Short Fiction Award) University of Iowa Press, 2015, ISBN: 978-1609383831

**Author Bio**

Edward Hamlin is the sole living descendent of the Sanborns (of Chase and Sanborn coffee fame), featured in the novel: Helen was his grandmother; Oren, his great-grandfather.

Edward’s story collection *Night in Erg Chebbi and Other Stories* was selected by Pulitzer Prize finalist Karen Russell as winner of the 2015 Iowa Short Fiction Award and went on to win the Colorado Book Award. Over the past few years Edward’s work has won the Nelson Algren Award, the Nelligan Prize, the NCW Short Story Prize and a Top of the Mountain Novel Prize. He’s been a finalist or runner-up for the Flannery O’Connor Award, the Narrative Story Prize, the Raymond Carver Award, the Bridgeport Prize, Missouri Review’s Jeffrey E. Smith Prize, Sarabande’s Mary McCarthy Award, the Mary C. Mohr Editors’ Prize, the David Nathan Myerson Fiction Prize, the Press 53 Fiction Award and other competitions. His work has appeared in the *Chicago Tribune*, *Ploughshares*, *Colorado Review*, *Missouri Review*, *American Fiction*, *Carve*, the *Bellevue Literary Review*, *Chariton Review*, *Printers Row Journal*, *Tiferet*, *Cobalt* and elsewhere, and has been nominated for three Pushcart Prizes. Stories of his have also been performed on stage and published by Audible. A New York native, Edward Hamlin spent his formative years in Chicago and now lives in the Colorado foothills.

**Praise for Edward Hamlin**

Edward Hamlin has been listening hard to the opaque rustling of the world. And he is just as adept at describing the crack a skull makes on tile as the ‘quieter, thrushier’ gurgling of a creek after a drought. The stories in *Night in Erg Chebbi* are sweeping and intimate and awesomely confident of their own effects. They document staggering, cataclysmic changes—forest fire, flash flood, revolution, murder—as well as the slow violence of grief and degenerative disease. In one story, a photographer is losing her eyesight and her art; in another, a boy leashed to his house on ‘a good long lead’ runs away. This is a collection with both depth and breadth, a book dedicated to revealing ‘the universal concealed in the weft of the particular.’ Hamlin spins the globe, jumping nimbly from a treetop lodge on a Brazilian riverbank to the lawn of a governor’s mansion on the eve of an execution to Merzouga, Morocco, ‘gateway to the dune sea of Erg Chebbi.’ No matter how wild or unsettling the events of a story, Hamlin holds the camera steady. As one character says, ‘What mattered lately was to observe with precision rather than to judge for good or ill.’ Each story here is a world in miniature, illuminated by the flashbulb bursts of Hamlin’s luminous, controlled prose.”—Karen Russell, judge, 2015 Iowa Short Fiction Award

“Edward Hamlin’s fictional worlds are as compelling as they are varied, and his characters intuit how much we’re all—finally—exiles, from the American couple who find their visit to Erg Chebbi flyblown and faintly absurd in its exoticism but shot through with menace, to the pregnant ecotourism manager transplanted from Belfast to the Brazilian rainforest, to the newly widowed second wife surprised at how much her heart seems to have closed to her children and the world. All of them are suffused with an observational intelligence and a pained compassion that are heartening. This is a beautifully written and politically astute collection.”—Jim Shepard, winner of The Story Prize and two-time nominee for The National Book Award

“Night in Erg Chebbi is a stunner. In these nine dispatches from farflung territories, skies detonate, boots are weapons, and people lie—and also tell the truth. Edward Hamlin observes it all with mellow wisdom, showing us the world as it has always been, but as we have never quite seen it before. A marvelous book about the natural world and the human landscapes of resilience, grief, and love.”— Katherine Hill, author, *The Violet Hour*

**Selling Points**

This novel will resonate with readers of: *Mercury Presents* by Anthony Marra (Hogarth, August 2022, ISBN: 978-0451495204); *Weyward* by Emelia Hart (St. Martin’s, March 2023, ISBN: 978-12502808000); *The Whalebone Theatre* by Joanna Quinn (Knopf, October 2022, ISBN: 978-0593321706); The Librarian of Burned Books by Brianna Labuskes (Morrow, February 2023, ISBN: 978-0063297128); The Lost Wife by Susanna Moore (Knopf, April 2023: ISBN: 978-0385351430)

**Marketing/Promotion**

Amazon A+ and Amazon Marketing Services

Green City’s publicist will work to secure major review, radio and print attention and interviews.