

Book Talk

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Madison Public Library

Marshall J. Cook

Please don't come back from the moon

By Dean Bakopoulos

1) please don't come back from the moon

"When I was 16, my father went to the moon."

With all the man gone, we boys became men. Our mothers became men, too.

"We missed our fathers."

"I was having one of those moments when I didn't want him to come back home."

2) some memories of my father

"We missed the drone of their big, clumsy presence."

3) summer 1992

"Your name is Sonya not Sunny."

4) the calming effect of jelly doughnuts

"I was old enough to know a few things, and one of them was this: the best American short stories weren't written by people like me."

"I still have a tendency to sit back and wait out the bad things that try and take over my life."

5) a newcomer's guide to Ann Arbor

How to escape Maple Rock on a Friday night: "Do not fall in love."

6) the boy with the backward chakra

"You can spend the night. It's inevitable." Holly Holloway to Michael.

"God, if anything, had to be a woman."

7) capable of love

"We've long ago lost the idea of permanence as a possibility."

"For the record, if you are now capable of love, we consider that unfair."

8) knights of labor

"Perhaps we had dreams. To be honest, we couldn't remember them. ...Perhaps you, our fathers, perhaps you know what we wanted from life."

9) the warning signs and symptoms of depression, 2001

"Not one goddamn second of dead air in my career. Not one goddamn second." Gina Gunderson

10) please don't... (reprise)

Less than two years later, "the moon finally called our names."

"It didn't get us yet... Eventually it might. Eventually it might win."

"I didn't believe I belonged here. I believed, sooner or later, I would destroy all of it."

"Like an eye, the moon follows us wherever we go."

A few more questions for consideration

Why is Father Walter Gorski's disappearance the most disturbing of all the defections to the moon?

With all the men gone, the boys and women become men. What does this mean specifically?

What does Michael remember and miss about his father?

What is your overall impression of Michael's father from his description of him?

Why does Sonya Stecko break up with Michael?

What effect does Manny Holloway's death have on Michael? How about the awareness that Father Mack is sleeping with Michael's mother?

What does it say about Michael that he can't tell if a book is good without its cover blurbs?

What is a "backward heart chakra"?

Why was Nick's plan to lead a sit-down strike at the mall "glorious and dangerous all at once"?

Is Michael suffering from depression?

Why doesn't Ella move in with Michael when he asks? Why does she move in later?

What (de)evolution does the old neighborhood and the town of Maple Rock undergo?

What do you think Bunny Slowinski was trying to convey in his message to his son? ("Dear Tom. There's no.")

Where was Bunny all those years before he's found dead in the Super 8 in Effingham, Illinois? What does Tom believe? How about Michael? How about you?

Dean Bakopoulos was born in Dearborn Heights, Michigan on July 6, 1975 to a Ukrainian mother and a Greek father. A child of immigrants, he grew up speaking both Ukrainian and English. He went to the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, and, while in school, worked as a writer for WWJ News Radio in Detroit. After graduating in 1997, he got married, moved to Wisconsin, worked on a horse farm (the best job he ever had, he says), and then became the buyer for Canterbury Booksellers, which once was a bookstore in Madison, Wisconsin. Later, he graduated from the University of Wisconsin MFA program and served as executive director of the Wisconsin Humanities Council.