

# Ten years post-Katrina, aftermath stories live on

*Acclaimed author and NEA recipient Margaret McMullan explores how people struggle with the ghost of Hurricane Katrina in new story collection*

## *Aftermath Lounge* by Margaret McMullan

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina destroyed 95% of the small coastal town of Pass Christian, Mississippi. With a 28-foot storm surge, the highest recorded in U.S. history, 55-foot waves, and winds reaching 120 mph, the town was wiped off the map—temporarily.

Award-winning author Margaret McMullan saw the destruction firsthand. Her family's historic Gulf Coast home—her father's beloved southern jewel—was one of the houses in Pass Christian devastated by Katrina. Despite the chaos immediately following the storm, McMullan's family was among the first to rebuild and donated to the Red Cross, the Pass Christian fire station, and the Pass Christian library.

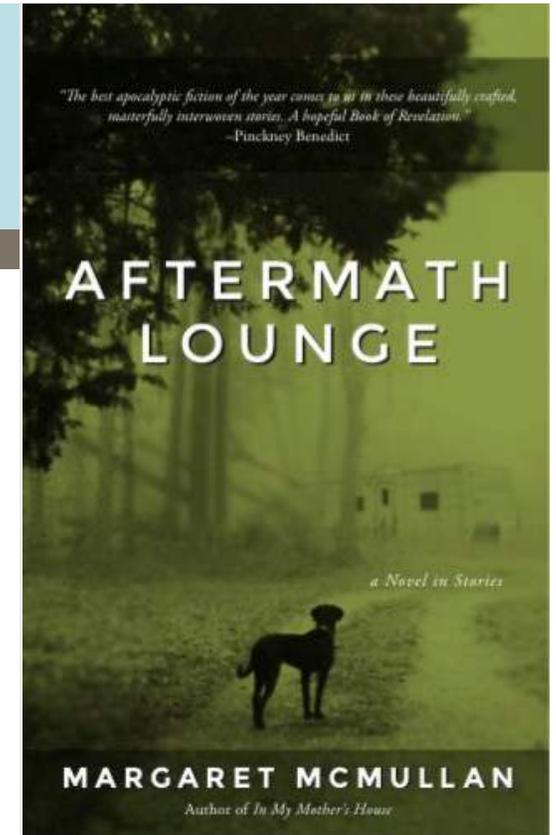
During this time, McMullan witnessed small acts of heroism that inspired her to write about the community and its people, and how tragedy shapes our character. In 2010, she was awarded a National Endowment of the Arts Fellowship to complete the project.

Born in part out of her family's deep connection to the community, *Aftermath Lounge: A Novel in Stories* (April 2015, Calypso Editions) releases at the 10-year anniversary of Katrina and comprises fictional vignettes about the people of Pass Christian in the storm's wake. The stories are connected by a setting near to the author's heart—the McMullans' home, which was originally constructed in 1845 and restored by her father numerous times over the years.

*Aftermath Lounge* is a compelling tribute to the Gulf Coast and resurrects the place and its people alongside their heartaches and triumphs. It is a riveting mosaic that feeds our desire to understand what it means to be alive in this day and age.

## About the Author

Margaret McMullan is the author of six award-winning novels including *In My Mother's House* (St. Martin's Press), *Sources of Light* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt), *Cashay* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt), *When I Crossed No-Bob* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt), and *How I Found the Strong* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt). Her writing has appeared in *The Chicago Tribune*, *Ploughshares*, *Southern Accents*, *TriQuarterly*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *The Sun*, and many other publications. She received an NEA Fellowship in literature for *Aftermath Lounge* and a Fulbright award to teach at the University of Pécs in Pécs, Hungary, for her upcoming non-fiction work, *Where the Angels Live*. Her anthology of essays by 25 well-known female authors writing about their fathers, *Every Father's Daughter* (McPherson & Company), is also available in Spring 2015. She currently holds the Melvin Peterson Endowed Chair in Creative Writing at the University of Evansville in Indiana.



## BOOK DETAILS

Calypso Editions

April 2015

Literary Fiction

Paperback, 146 pages

[www.margaretmcmullan.com](http://www.margaretmcmullan.com)

PR BY THE BOOK

## Praise for *Aftermath Lounge*

"I love these stories. They're so smart, beautiful, true—and so real—that they seemed like part of my own history. I felt homesick in the best way, flooded with a kind of saddened joy. They snuffed the gimlet-eyed adult and brought to life again, for a while, the wondrous child." —**Brad Watson, *Aliens in the Prime of Their Lives***

"I like these new stories so much it's hard to know where to start. But a good place to begin would be...well, Place. She brings it to life like few writers can. You can almost feel the heavy air on your skin. As for her characters, they're three-dimensional people who are so real, you feel like they're in the room with you. She's got a great ear, a fine eye, and something else that you can't buy—namely, a very large heart." —**Steve Yarbrough, *The Realm of Last Chances***

"*Aftermath Lounge* is a beautiful, compelling collection, the emotions as powerfully charged as the winds of a hurricane. Margaret McMullan writes movingly about those living in and pulling themselves out of destruction and chaos and loss to salvage all they can of love and redemption. From the voices of orphaned children to the least likely man to don a Santa Claus suit, there are moments of devastation, comic relief and grace." —**Jill McCorkle, *Life After Life***

"In *Aftermath Lounge* each short story, like a homing pigeon, returns to the Gulf Coast to explore how its people struggle with the ghost of Hurricane Katrina. With riveting prose, Margaret McMullan tracks the weblike connections of family and friends haunted by the storm from Pass Christian, Mississippi, to Chicago." —**William Ferris, *The Storied South: Voices of Writers and Artists***

"How strange, that the best apocalyptic fiction of the year should come to us, not borne on the maelstrom of nuclear fire or horrific epidemic, but rather in this series of beautifully crafted and masterfully interwoven literary stories. In *Aftermath*, our humanity is not simply swept away by the fury and chaos of Katrina; rather, it is tested, sometimes broken, sometimes intensified, and ultimately renewed by the deluge. A hopeful Book of Revelation." —**Pinckney Benedict, *Miracle Boy and Other Stories***

## Author Tour

April 9, 7pm - Honey Lounge , Minneapolis, MN  
April 16, 4pm - Melvin Peterson Gallery, Evansville, IN  
April 18, 2pm - B&N, Evansville, IN  
April 24, 5pm - Pass Christian Books, MS  
April 25, 1pm - Lemuria Books, Jackson, MS  
April 30 - May 2 - Kentucky Book Festival  
May 3 - WordTheatre, Burbank , CA  
May 7, 5pm - Planters Coffeehouse, Henderson, KY

May 13, 7pm - Malaprops Bookstore, Asheville, NC  
May 15-17 - South Carolina Book Festival  
May 23 - Indy Reads Books, Indianapolis, IN  
June 5, 5pm - Lake Forest Book Store, Lake Forest, IL  
June 5-8 - Printer's Row Book Festival, Chicago, IL  
June 3, 6pm - Chicago Public Library, Chicago, IL  
June 15, 6:30pm - Parnassus Books, Nashville, TN

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## ACCOLADES

Honored by Chicago Public Library, 2013  
Carl Sandburg Literary Awards Dinner

National Author Winner, 2011 Eugene &  
Marilyn Glick Indiana Authors Award

2010 Fulbright Fellowship to teach and  
research book in Hungary

2010 National Endowment of the Arts  
Fellowship for *Aftermath Lounge*

2005 Artist of the Year, Southwestern  
Indiana Arts Council, Sept. 2005

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