



Expecting Goodness & Other Stories

C. Michael Curtis

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When renowned fiction editor C. Michael Curtis moved from Boston to a small Southern college town to accept a distinguished chair in the English department, he assumed he'd be far away from a literary center. But Curtis, long-time fiction editor of *The Atlantic* and self-professed habitual anthologist, found himself in a pocket of extraordinary writers in Spartanburg, South Carolina, home of the Hub City Writers Project. The venerable literary editor's exploration of his new city has led to the publication of *Expecting Goodness*, a collection of 20 Southern short stories by both established and up-and-coming authors who share the same hometown.

The title story by Michael S. Stone transpires in an airport as a hesitant young husband begins his journey toward an adopted child. In Rosa Shand's heartbreaking "Sweetness," a 15-year-old Charleston girl discovers her mother's lesbian love affair ("I knew we were all in hell," she says). Two teenage boys looking for a good time encounter a deadbeat, aging Jack Kerouac in Deno Trakas's "Pretty Pitiful God." There's levity in this collection, too; in Lou Dischler's offbeat "Lola's Prayer," a file clerk believes she has lost a pregnant chinchilla up the tailpipe of her Toyota.

Among contributors are Thomas McConnell, author of the story collection *A Picture Book of Hell* (Texas Tech University Press); National Public Radio producer Thomas Pierce; Susan Tekulve, whose collection *My Mother's War Stories* received the Winnow Press Fiction Prize; and Elizabeth Cox, author of *A Slow Moon* (Random House, 2001). Expect goodness from all of them.

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