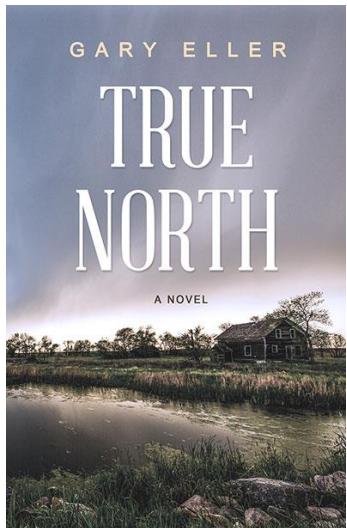




For Immediate Release

Everyone Has a Story . . . and Everyone Has a Secret

TRUE NORTH by Gary Eller



True North weaves the stories of three Great Plains farm families together in a pattern of mistakes, tragedies, secrets, and long-held grudges spanning the 1930s-1960s in this composite novel of linked short stories. The authenticity of the collection is enhanced by the events of the era: The Great Depression, World War II, Vietnam, the social upheaval of the 1960s, and the decline of the family farm with its consequent westward flow of population into urban areas.

"As I wrote about the interactions of the three principal families in *True North* and how they battled through the challenges of their lives, I encountered an unexpected realization," says author Gary Eller. "What I thought was a permanent antipathy toward the area that formed my attitudes, personality, and sensibilities faded to be replaced by a growing affection. I discovered that the more I was compelled to think about the area, the more it became a place where nothing happens to one where everything happens. I realize now that this is a phenomenon well-known to writers. Put under a microscope, a subject will reveal a nature previously unknown or well concealed."

Life has always been difficult and dangerous for those living on and around the Turtle Mountain Reservation. Everyone has a story. Everyone has a secret. Everyone thinks they're only connected to their neighbors by the isolated, peculiar town they share.

Orphaned Sioux Ida Florence Little Shay is determined to escape the life before her, but her course of action only draws her into a world of increasing conflict and deepening poverty. Young Fawn Breen appears as if she is from a different century. With her primitive, animalistic father as her only companion, she is forced to look after herself when she is thrust into society. Harold Peavey is an idealistic young man who finds his views of the world in severe conflict with those around him, facing ostracism by his community when he refuses to abandon his beliefs.

Enduring mistakes, tragedies, secrets, and long-held grudges, these families clash together as they struggle to survive and find their way in an ever-changing world.

Readers and lovers of the literature of the Great Plains and other rural regions as well as fans of Wendell Berry, Ron Rash, and Alistair MacLeod will enjoy this collection by Gary Eller.

Releasing worldwide on November 18, 2021, *True North* is published by BHC Press and is available in hardcover, trade softcover, and ebook at all major retailers and booksellers, including Bookshop.org.

Booksellers, retailers, and librarians may order direct from Ingram, Baker & Taylor, Gardners, Overdrive, and Perma-Bound.

About the author: Gary Eller is the author of *True North* and the short fiction collection, *Thin Ice and Other Risks*. His writing awards include the River City Award in Fiction, the Fowler Prize, and the Minnesota Voices Award, among others. He is the recipient of a Creative Writing Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. Gary resides in Ames, Iowa.

About BHC Press: BHC Press is an award-winning publisher of fresh and innovative fiction and nonfiction for the adult, teen, and children's market. Based in southeast Michigan, their books are published in hardcover, trade softcover, and ebook, and have been favorably reviewed and featured in *Kirkus Reviews*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Booklist*, *Library Journal*, *Foreword Reviews Magazine*, and many others. To learn more, visit www.bhcpress.com.

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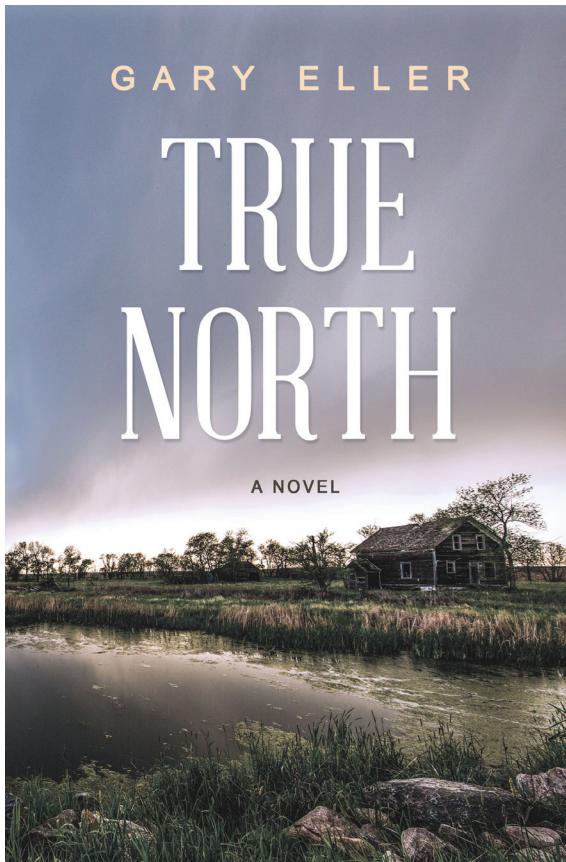
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True North

A Novel

by Gary Eller

FICTION | LITERARY | HISTORICAL

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Summary

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Young Fawn Breen appears as if she is from a different century. With her primitive, animalistic father as her only companion, she is forced to look after herself when she is thrust into society.

Harold Peavey is an idealistic young man who finds his views of the world in severe conflict with those around him, and he faces ostracism by his community when he refuses to abandon his beliefs.

Enduring mistakes, tragedies, secrets, and long-held grudges spanning the 1930s-1960s that have permanently marked them, these three Great Plains farm families clash together as they struggle to survive and find their way in an ever-changing world.

Marketing

- Print and online advertising
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- ARC distribution on NetGalley & review solicitation to all major trade reviewers
- Blogger and Instagram outreach for author features & reviews
- Blog tour and other virtual events
- Email marketing to libraries & bookstores
- Featured by publisher at Publishers Weekly US Book Show

Key Selling Points

- Readers who enjoy historical fiction and short story collections will enjoy reading this composite novel of linked short stories.
- Readers and lovers of the literature of the Great Plains and other rural regions as well as fans of Wendell Berry, Ron Rash, and Alistair MacLeod will find a new favorite author in Gary Eller.

Author Bio

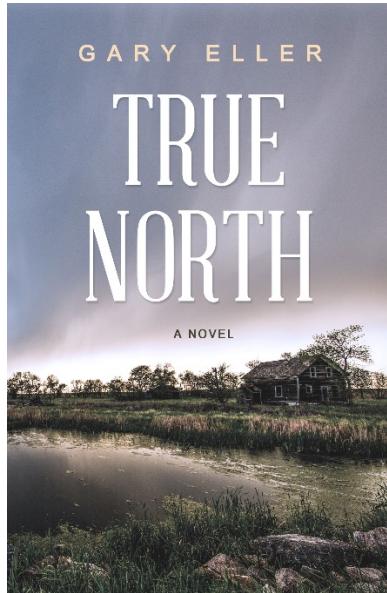
Gary Eller is the author of *True North* and the short fiction collection, *Thin Ice and Other Risks*.

His writing has appeared in many publications, and he is the winner of the River City Award in Fiction, the Fowler Prize, and the Minnesota Voices Award, among others. He studied at the Iowa Writer's Workshop, where he earned an M.F.A. in Creative Writing, and he is the recipient of a Creative Writing Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts.



He lives and writes in Ames, Iowa, while spending part of each summer in his family's cabin on scenic Lake Upsilon in the Turtle Mountains of North Dakota, the area where most of *True North* is set.

ADVANCE PRAISE FOR *TRUE NORTH* by Gary Eller



“a thoughtful yet passionate, densely woven tableau of interconnected lives and eras in the tradition of Sherwood Anderson; Gary Eller brings a lifetime’s care and an artist’s eye to his magnum opus—a shivery swirl of adventure provoking double-takes of recognition: They are us. Rich, funny, moving, and wise.” —**Joan Frank, author of *The Outlook for Earthlings***

“True North will quickly jerk you by the roots from the tranquil prairie grasses into a world of mystery, murder and intrigue. Eller’s depth of detail and description takes you smoothly through the sights, sounds and fragrances of an uncovered world.” —**Dennis R. Waller, author of *Walkin’ Joe and the Midnight Marauders***

“sad, mysterious, tender, sometimes hilarious and occasionally savage. But they all have a couple of things in common: real-as-life characters you’ll want to spend time with, and an elegant readability that will make that time go much too fast.” —**Jim Nichols, author of *Blue Summer*, winner of the 2021 Maine Fiction Award**

“Like Toni Morrison, Gary Eller knows salvation is always the motive, whether the crime is murder—or love.” —**Paul M. Hedeon, author of *The Butterfly***

“engrossing... Through unflinching narration, Eller submerges readers into the bleak, but lushly imagined, inner worlds of the Little Shays, the Breens, the Morinvilleys, and the Peaveys, as they grapple with each other for primacy of place and survival.” —**Debra Marquart, author of *The Horizontal World: Growing Up Wild in the Middle of Nowhere***

“Funny, compelling, and often disturbing, True North introduces us to characters who endure despite poverty and cruel Fate, and we cheer for them because of and despite their desperation. This novel shows us a new angry Eller, and it’s a justified anger in the tradition of Ed Abbey and Kurt Vonnegut.” —**Hank Nuwer, author of *Sons of the Dawn***

Gary Eller on *True North*

When I decided in mid-life that I wanted to become a writer the standard advice then as now holds that one should write about things most familiar. But when I searched for the right words to shed light on Alaska where I had lived for several years, or to talk about pharmacy which provided me with an income, I got nowhere.

Up to now in my late-blooming literary career I've been primarily a short story writer. Eventually I noticed that most of the stories for which readers expressed admiration were reminiscent of the society as well as the times that prevailed during my youth in the Turtle Mountain region of North Dakota. I also realized that my short stories had a chronological continuity to them. It made sense to string them together making, in effect, a long story. Thus, this novel is as much a child of adoption as one of birth.

As I wrote about the interactions of the three principal families in *True North* and how they battled through the challenges of their lives, I encountered an unexpected realization. What I thought was a permanent antipathy toward the area that formed my attitudes, personality, and sensibilities faded to be replaced by a growing affection. I discovered that the more I was compelled to think about the area, the more it became a place where nothing happens to one where everything happens. I realize now that this is a phenomenon well-known to writers. Put under a microscope, a subject will reveal a nature previously unknown or well concealed.

The Turtle Mountains, yes, mountains, though they rise less than a thousand feet above the surrounding prairie, encompass an area of lakes, woodlands, lush greenery, wild animals, and hidden places. Winters remain harsh and many of the flaws listed above still exist though to a lesser degree. But it is loved both by those who went away, those who stayed, and all in search of deep truths about themselves. It is home in the way a house when viewed from afar is only a house, but once inside becomes a home. Even if we cannot access those elements that made us who we are, our minds and imaginations will bring us back again and again.

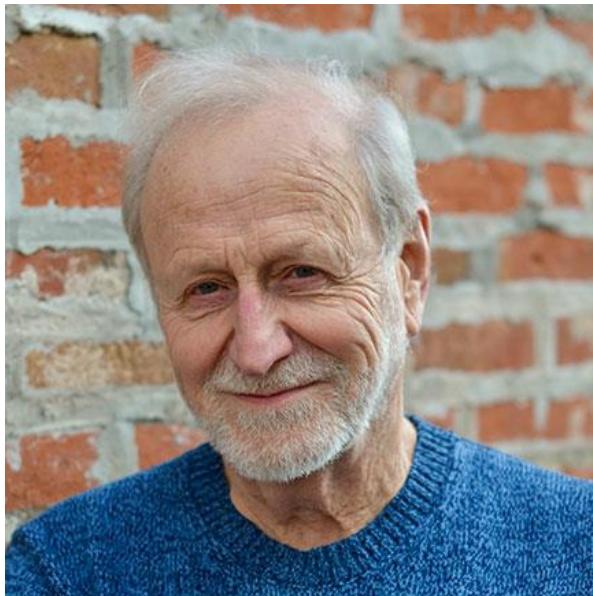


Photo credit: Erin Todey

Gary Eller is the author of *True North* and the short fiction collection, *Thin Ice and Other Risks*.

Born and raised in the small town of Rolla, North Dakota, Gary Eller was a late starter to writing. After earning a degree in pharmacy from North Dakota State University, he worked in Idaho, Nevada, and for several years in Kodiak, Alaska. He began writing seriously after studying at the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop where he completed an M.F.A. in Creative Writing.

Eller's previous collection of short fiction, *Thin Ice and Other Risks*, was well-received and described as "reminiscent of Raymond Carver's best work." In addition to many short stories, he has published nonfiction articles on such varied topics as commercial fishing in Alaska, rare museum collections, and post-divorce life. He's also conducted interviews and published several articles on the craft of writing. His focus in the nonfiction genre, however, has been on baseball, one of his many loves.

His writing has appeared in many publications, and he is the winner of the River City Award in Fiction, the Fowler Prize, and the Minnesota Voices Award, among others. He studied at the Iowa Writer's Workshop, where he earned an M.F.A. in Creative Writing, and he is the recipient of a Creative Writing Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Eller has taught fiction and nonfiction at Iowa State University and lectured widely on aspects of creative writing.

Before returning as a writer to what he regards as the redemptive qualities of the Midwest, Eller was rescued twice in reality (once by helicopter from sub-Arctic Alaska wilderness, and once from bear country on Kodiak Island) and countless times metaphorically.

He lives and writes in Ames, Iowa, while spending part of each summer in his family's cabin on scenic Lake Upsilon in the Turtle Mountains of North Dakota, the area where most of *True North* is set.