

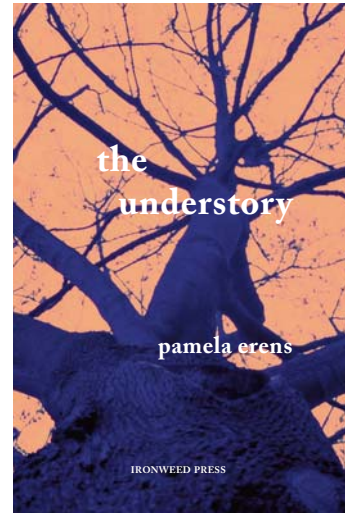
IRONWEED PRESS

Proudly Announces

the September 4, 2007, Publication of

the understory

by pamela erens



I am amazed and moved by Pamela Erens's *The Understory*. It brings to mind (and stands up well next to) such literary ancestors as Hamsun's *Hunger*, or Beckett's stories of the evicted, but it is uniquely tender in its treatment of the isolated mind's quest to keep alive what is most radiant and most fragile in the face of the brutal catastrophe of reality. Erens brings extraordinary powers of empathy and technical mastery to the character of Jack Gorse—normally the person we pass on the street and, after a token moment of pity, attempt to forget as rapidly as possible. In this book there is no turning away from him, or, more accurately and terribly, from the world as he perceives it.

Franz Wright, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for *Walking to Martha's Vineyard*

This is a strange, haunting meditation on aloneness and the melancholy of frustrated love, written knowingly about a character bereft of self-knowledge. The language is precise and considered, the mood sustained, the effect at once narrative and poetic.

Andrew Solomon, winner of the National Book Award for *The Noonday Demon*

Set in New York City and in a Buddhist monastery in rural Vermont, *The Understory* is both a mystery and a psychological study and reveals that repression and self-expression can be equally destructive.

The perennially unemployed Jack Gorse is the center of this gripping novel, winner of the Ironweed Press Fiction Prize. Entrapped by his obsessive-compulsive routines, he immerses himself in secondhand books and in his study of Central Park plant life, his two bulwarks against a world he finds overwhelming. An attraction to another man, a near stranger, takes Jack by surprise, destabilizes his precarious balance, and culminates in violence. *The Understory* will resonate with readers long after its dramatic conclusion.

about the author

Fiction, poetry, and essays by Pamela Erens have appeared in a wide variety of literary and mainstream magazines. A former editor at *Glamour* and the recipient of two New Jersey State Council on the Arts fellowships in fiction, Erens lives in New Jersey with her husband and two children. For more information, go to www.pamela-erens.com.

Pub Date: September 4, 2007

Perfect-bound, paper

5.25 x 8, 143 pp

\$11.95

Fiction

ISBN 1-931336-04-0

Ironweed Press, Inc.

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