



She Loved Me Once, and Other Stories

Lester Goran

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Lester Goran's first book of short stories, *Tales from the Irish Club*, was chosen by the New York Times Book Review as a "Notable Book of the Year 1996." This second collection also centers around a group of men and women in an Irish-American enclave in Pittsburgh, primarily during the years surrounding World War II, but extending at times into the eighties. With evocative settings and narratives ranging from the supernatural to the humorous, from bawdy hilarity to richly detailed realism, Goran creates once more his world of poignant and magical times and places within the mundane affairs of ordinary men and women. With his mastery of language and images he shows again what Paul West has termed "the lunatic sadness of things." Goran writes of characters in a time and place of relatively stable circumstances: the young woman who thinks her smile mesmerizes all manner of men in dangerous "Lorelei" fascination; three adventuresome youths who take on the responsibilities of working as professional pallbearers in a very strange cemetery; Light Culhane, who failed at every possible human endeavor except having a beautiful woman fall forever in love with him; the man who talked too much about his sexual liaisons and lived to regret it; Desmond's sister, who devises a rare medical program to save her dying brother; and other misfits, saints, braggarts, straight arrows, and geniuses. As the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette noted in its review of *Tales from the Irish Club*, "Goran's many characters come alive with a immediacy and clarity that makes their stories seem like today's gossip." *She Loved Me Once and Other Stories* is a worthy successor to that book.

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