



Waterloo: A Novel

Karen Olsson

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"You're in a slump."

Nick Lasseter's boss is talking about his job performance as a reporter for the *Waterloo Weekly*--but he might as well be talking about Nick's whole life. His current assignment, a profile of a legendary, liberal ex-congressman, is in trouble even before his subject abruptly dies. His sexy girlfriend has spurned him in favor of a muffin magnate. His uncle, a booze-fueled political operative, has decided to crash on Nick's couch after being thrown out of his own house. And Nick's best friends and ex-bandmates seem to spend more and more of their time at the local bar, hazily lamenting a lost golden age of high ideals and low cover charges that suspiciously coincides with their own rapidly-disappearing youth.

When Nick grudgingly agrees to write a piece about a rising female Republican legislator, he stumbles onto a political fight in which the good guys and bad guys start to seem interchangeable. And not even the deceased can be relied on to stick to their stories when Nick gets involved with the late congressman's confidante, a young woman who has her own hidden ties to the town's history. As they search the dim depths of a civic past that's anything but dead and buried, they find that some things never change--things like the moral ambiguity of practical politics and the sad, hilarious cluelessness of young men in love.

Bittersweet and biting, elegiac and sharply observed, *Waterloo* is a portrait of a generation in search of itself--and a love letter to the slackers, rockers, hustlers, hacks, and hangers-on who populate Austin, Texas--from a formidable new intelligence in American fiction.

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