

Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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The UnAmericans.

Antopol, Molly (Author)

Feb 2014. 256 p. Norton, hardcover, \$24.95. (9780393241136).

In her first story collection, Antopol explores the everyday anxieties and complex past lives of immigrant characters in New York boroughs and Old World homelands, including Kiev, Tel Aviv, and Brooklyn. In “Duck and Cover,” a widowed father struggles to keep secret his involvement with the Communist Party in McCarthy-era Los Angeles, while his daughter discovers her sexuality in a neighbor’s fall-out shelter. In “The Quietest Man,” a former dissident from Czechoslovakia must confront the facts of his estranged daughter’s new play, which he selfishly worries will hurt his reputation. In another story, a grandmother in Queens recounts the questionable ethics of a wartime brigade called the Yiddish Underground, common citizens who fought the Nazi occupation of Jewish communities, such as the sizable “lost shtetl” of Antopol, Belarus. In these stories, Antopol depicts with bold strokes and uncanny intelligence the intimate links between family, history, and politics, never failing to capture the grit and hurt of intergenerational confrontation. Honored as one of the National Book Foundation’s 5 Under 35, Antopol enters American fiction with startling originality and honesty.

— *Diego Báez*