



Truth Like the Sun

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A classic and hugely entertaining political novel, the cat-and-mouse story of urban intrigue in Seattle both in 1962, when Seattle hosted the World's Fair, and in 2001, after its transformation in the Microsoft gold rush.

Larger than life, Roger Morgan was the mastermind behind the fair that made the city famous and is still a backstage power forty years later, when at the age of seventy he runs for mayor in hopes of restoring all of Seattle's former glory. Helen Gulanos, a reporter every bit as eager to make her mark, sees her assignment to investigate the events of 1962 become front-page news with Morgan's candidacy, and resolves to find out who he really is and where his power comes from: in 1962, a brash and excitable young promoter, greeting everyone from Elvis Presley to Lyndon Johnson, smooth-talking himself out of difficult situations, dipping in and out of secret card games; now, a beloved public figure with, it turns out, still-plentiful secrets. Wonderfully interwoven into this tale of the city of dreams are backroom deals, idealism and pragmatism, the best and worst ambitions, and all the aspirations that shape our communities and our lives.

Truth Like the Sun Details

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From Reader Review Truth Like the Sun for online ebook

Charlie Quimby says

A high 4. I plan to read another Jim Lynch based on this novel. A good read that adeptly juggles two timelines in the main character's life to shed light on contrasting American eras as well as stages of individual wisdom. Conceptually, it's very strong, and I found the intrigue around development, boosterism and crime entertaining in a PBS-meets-FX TV series sort of way.

But the young reporter who helped bring down the Father of the Seattle World's Fair 40 years later was really no match for Roger Morgan as a character.

Jenny Shank says

<http://www.dallasnews.com/entertainme...>

"Truth Like the Sun," by Jim Lynch

By JENNY SHANK Special Contributor books@dallasnews.com

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Fifty years ago, Seattle hosted the World's Fair, a six-month extravaganza whose approach prompted private investors to rush the Space Needle through construction, completing it in time to serve as a symbol of the futuristic image the 1962 fair hoped to project.

As Jim Lynch writes in his taut and accomplished new novel, *Truth Like the Sun*, the Space Needle was meant to beckon newcomers to Seattle: "Where better to start afresh? A whole new way of living in a city of things to come. That's right. A city so short on history it's mostly all future anyway."

In this brisk, bustling and good-humored work, Lynch imagines the Space Needle as the pet project of charming young businessman Roger Morgan, "the grand exalted dreamer himself," who convinced the power brokers of "stuffy, postwar Seattle" to host the fair, and drew the original sketch for the Space Needle on a napkin. Morgan, who "suffers from an attention surplus disorder," whirls at the center of the fair, solving problems, schmoozing, shepherding dignitaries such as LBJ, Edward R. Murrow and Elvis through its wonders, seeking to impress them with the city he loves beyond all measure.

Meanwhile in 2001, ambitious journalist Helen Gulanos has just arrived from parts east for a reporting job with the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. A single mother with Pulitzer dreams, Gulanos chafes when she's assigned a story about the 40th anniversary of the fair, which she learns is "a local sacred cow with fawning coverage shamelessly regurgitated" through the prior anniversaries. Known for exposing corrupt politicians at her previous newspapers, Gulanos aims for a meatier story and finds it as she decides to investigate the past of mystery man Morgan, who at age 70 has decided to run for mayor.

The novel's structure is clever and propulsive, alternating one chapter set in 1962 with one in 2001. The reader learns Morgan's secrets as Gulanos searches library archives and interviews ancient sources, some of whom harbor grudges against Morgan. Through the 1962 sections, Lynch shows what actually happened, demonstrating how difficult the truth can be to pin down and how often rushed newspaper articles fail to capture nuance and intent.

Through sharp detail and incisive descriptions, the 1962 sections bring the era to life by conveying the gee-

whiz-isn't-the-future-fantastic World's Fair vibe paired with the overhanging dread of nuclear annihilation prompted by the Cuban missile crisis. The 2001 sections, set before Sept. 11, when newspaper publishing had just begun to falter, capture a historical moment that feels nearly as distant as 1962.

Before Lynch became a novelist, he was an award-winning reporter for newspapers including the Seattle Times, the rival of the paper Gulanos works for. Perhaps he picked the P.I. for Gulanos because there's something more poetic about working for a doomed newspaper (the P.I. shifted to publishing online-only in 2009). Truth Like the Sun bears more than a whiff of nostalgia for the way newspapers can tell a city's evolving story as no other media can, even through imperfect articles.

Jenny Shank's first novel, *The Ringer*, was a finalist for the Mountains & Plains Independent Booksellers Association's Reading the West Award.

Ilya says

well written, smart, but failed to really deliver. Author failed to get me excited enough about the mystery and its ultimate resolution. The chapters set in 2001 were consistently more interesting than the ones set in 1962, but the device of toggling back and forth between the recent past and the more distant past didn't really work for me.

Scott says

Truth Like the Sun, a novel by Jim Lynch set entirely in Seattle and immersed in the local politics thereof, sat on my Amazon wish list* for well over a year, and I can't even remember who suggested it, nor the reasons why I put it there, but I was in the mood for something plotty and muscular last week, and it seemed to fit to bill. And for the first two-thirds or so, the gamble paid off! In telling the story of how Seattle grew up (or tried to), moving from frontier town to world-class destination, Lynch follows the career of the (fictional) "Mr. Seattle", Roger Morgan, who as a young man was the driving force behind the (real-life) 1962 Seattle World's Fair--a huge success financially, publicity-wise, and psychologically, allowing the city to make the leap into the "modern age"--and who, in 2001, decides finally to run for Mayor as the city teeters on the brink of... not ruin, exactly, but the dot.com bubble has definitely burst, and Morgan wants to save the city he loves and helped build.

The book jumps between the two eras in alternating chapters, and it holds together nicely for a good chunk of the time. Morgan is smart and charming, and we're definitely rooting for him even as Lynch slowly reveals his hero's seamier side. But just how scandalous are/were his actions? The more the story focussed on the answer to that question, the more my interest waned, in large measure because I didn't really believe the young woman who Lynch burdens with solving a bunch of not terribly interesting mysteries (on the level of: did Morgan unethically profit from some real estate deals 40 years ago????), an investigative reporter for the Seattle P&I named Helen Gulanos who's all over the place tonally and in her actions. And the interactions between the two leads are just ham-fisted and silly. On the level of bad TV movie. Oh well.

*Which, by the way, for Kindle users like me, provides the same function and what-should-I-read-next pleasure as my bookshelf at home used to, except now I don't have to actually pay money for anything until the exact moment I'm ready to start reading the next book. Just saying.

MisterLiberry Head says

Roger Morgan is kind of an Elmer Gantry of municipal boosterism, hustling “father” of the 1962 Seattle World’s fair. Helen Gulanos is a violin-playing single mom with a head of hair like a tumbleweed who, in 2001, is building a career as an investigative newspaper reporter. When Roger, still a Seattle-area legend, unexpectedly makes a run for mayor at age 70, Helen’s newspaper reluctantly takes a run at puncturing the reputation of “the grand exalted dreamer.” Roger’s life-long friend and advisor Teddy Severson says of the relentless reporter: “She plays with sharp knives.” (p64) Great line!

The story alternates between 1962 during the Fair’s surprisingly successful run and 2001, which is the beginning of the death of two-newspaper, old-school competitive journalism in major U.S. cities. All in all, the juxtaposed settings work well by complementing and informing each other, heightened by some fun vignettes of historical figures such as a farting LBJ, John Glenn as a robotic NASA celebrity and a somber, thoughtful Elvis.

With his many personal secrets, his over-reaching and hubris, Roger is a tightrope walker sure to take a fatal flaw under the spotlight of a heated political race. The surprise is that it takes so long. He describes himself as a “civic handyman” and “midwife for good ideas”—which is not the same thing as a fixer. His gift, like that of the best con men, is focusing on the dream and wearing blinders to everything else. I told myself at about the four-fifths point in the novel that if Roger ended in a particular, clumsily foreshadowed way, I would throw the book across the room. Sorry, friendly branch library, but toss it I did! The perfunctory ending is the only real weakness in Lynch’s story, which takes it’s title (and moral) from a line spoken by Elvis: “Truth is like the sun, isn’t it? You can shut it out for a time, but it ain’t going away” (p148).

Martin McClellan says

I live one mile from the Space Needle. Seattle Center is, literally, my local park. Lynch gets the details of the place right, including how unchanged it is to this day. Only over the past few years have they started modernizing and sprucing the place up, taking the hard choices the nostalgic and better memories kept opposing. The stories he tells are like stories I’ve heard, and many of the characters based on real Seattle old-time characters I’ve read about.

I also work in the old Post-Intelligencer building, where despite the P-I Globe turning over, there is no newspaper business left. Even the website team relocated, leaving only a few unconnected tenants in their old space (one of which I work for, ironically in the online news business). The characters from the newsroom seemed also to be pretty accurate to type.

But still the whole thing didn’t add up for me. I like the subversive ways he dealt with common plot tropes, not giving in to making this a book that builds to something false or overplayed. The whole work felt a bit rushed, though, as if he didn’t have the time to grind the wood with the fine grit -- some corners are still a little sharp.

Both his characters were nearly there -- his old-world charmer with the political connections and humor, the mountain climber who travelled and could wear rain gear and white tie. He was fascinating, and close to fleshed out, but had some hollow bits and didn’t quite read for me, as if he were a ghost I could see through but couldn’t quite get the full measure of.

And his newspaper reporter was bordering on cliché, unwilling to reveal anything of herself, she zigged and

zagged but barely stopped enough to truly read her. As if both of them were being described by the space around them not the space they take up.

Still, I liked the read. I hope it is the one Lynch wanted, but I wonder if he would have wanted more time with it. Think it could have been a great book if it had percolated more. I wonder how much pressure there was to get it out for the 50th anniversary of the world's fair. I wonder how much the book would have changed if that deadline was two years away.

L says

I've been wondering lately if my standards are too low, because I seem to be loving every book I read and giving them pretty high ratings. Well, I don't have to wonder anymore.

I heard about Truth Like the Sun when it first came out and was really looking forward to reading this story set in the Seattle Worlds Fair and also 2001. But the thing about historical fiction is that in order for it to work, either the historical part has to be so well researched that it leaves you wanting to learn more, or the fiction has to be really compelling. Truth Like the Sun has neither.

Roger Morgan is a young up and comer who runs and promotes the fair, and 40 or so years later decides to run for mayor. Helen is a reporter for the Seattle P-I, single mother, and trying to expose the truth about Roger, I guess. Jim Lynch writes like someone who has no experience in Seattle. His descriptions of both characters and their time periods and locations are inadequately, generically described and use stilted, awkward dialogue. All characters become some weird caricatures of...I don't know what, but it isn't Seattle (or Youngstown, Ohio, where Helen is from). Sort of a cross between Barney Miller and Lou Grant and maybe that movie Cocoon where the old people are abducted by the UFO. Luckily the book is short and only took a day or so to read, and I didn't have much going on anyway, otherwise I'd go find Jim Lynch and ask him for my money and my time back.

Marilyn says

This is the third Jim Lynch book that I've read. His books are quirky. This was my least favorite. His first book, "The Highest Tide" was especially enjoyable because I loved his gifted young protagonist. His second, "Border Songs" was set just a few miles away from where I live and featured eccentric characters who were humorous, if not completely believable. The beginning of this novel was really underwhelming until I began to wonder who was going to win the tug-of-war between the main character and his adversary. That curiosity took me to the end of the book, but I was never deeply involved.

I do like the fact that Lynch is a different writer than I usually read and quite clever. I appreciate that his books are set in Washington and raise my interest in what he digs up about each location for background material. Lynch manages to drum up the most unique and fascinating people with whom I do not identify as I do with most novels I read.

Jill says

As different as this book is from the author's previous two books, in one way there is continuity: in his advocating that we expand the terrain of our vision to see what is around us; that we don't get so caught up in the quotidian that we miss all the wonder and beauty and excitement around us every day. And does he ever make a case for the wonder, beauty, and excitement of Seattle!

On this fiftieth anniversary of the Seattle World's Fair, Lynch has created a story about the fair's construction and the main (fictional) visionary behind the scenes, Roger Morgan, age 30 at the time in 1962. Roger, an inspirational speaker, a "mover and a shaker", a man of ideas, was "the most important guy to have on your side if you wanted to get any civic project off the ground..." And though he had relationships with many women, there was only one true love in his life, and that was Seattle.

The book starts in April, 1962, right before the opening of the fair: "This is when and where it begins, with all the dreamers champagne-drunk and stumbling on the head of the Needle."

Roger Morgan, "the grand exalted dreamer himself," is in his heyday, the world his oyster, full of pride in the Space Needle, the Fair, and for what it will do for the city he loves. And he *does* see it as only the beginning. His best friend Teddy chides him, saying "enough is never enough with you... You can't get enough of anything,":

"Roger rubs his cheeks and averts his eyes, wondering if it's that obvious he's increasingly driven half-mad by the limitations of having only one life. All the things he'll never see or do or understand. All the people he'll never know."

This is one of the main themes of this book, that any one life does not provide enough time or opportunity. Roger wants to see it all, experience it all, do it all. There will be no passionless mediocrity of growing older for Roger. He is not afraid to let go of the present, and let the change he helps effect carry him in its stream. In fact he is not attached to *things*; it is his *city*, Seattle, that he wants to be the showcase of his dreams. With the iconic phallic-shaped Space Needle, he can say to the rest of the country: the New West is just as puissant, and perhaps even more so, since we are still in the process of *becoming*!

The book alternates between Roger in 1962 and Roger 39 years later, in April, 2001. Now 70, hampered by declining health and energy, watching his old friends die one by one with increasing frequency, he decides to make a "last hurrah" against his diminishing hour glass, and to run for mayor. Indeed, there are quite a few parallels between this and Edwin O'Connor's classic work, "The Last Hurrah." Ironically though, in the O'Connor book, it is the growing importance of TV ads for campaigning that so affects the outcome of the race, whereas in this story, it is the dying newspaper that makes a difference.

By 2001, Roger thought he had outrun time and truth, and was still electable. But he never counted on the arrival in Seattle of Helen Gulanos, a beautiful and ambitious reporter from the Midwest who gets a job with the *Post-Intelligencer*.

By the time Helen comes to Seattle, it is a different place than it was before the World's Fair. Its very accomplishments annoy Helen:

"She'd never seen a city this full of itself. The most livable! The most literary! The best place to locate a business or raise or kid or have a dog or get cancer! The capital of the new world economy! And the locals swallowed all these national rankings and blather, even during this current dot-com hangover. *Just look!* they told her, as if the views alone justified the hype."

Assigned to a back-page story about the upcoming fortieth anniversary of the fair, Helen feels nothing but resentment:

"...from what she could tell, the fair was an artifact of the corniest of American times and, worse yet, a local sacred cow with fawning coverage shamelessly regurgitated through the ten-, twenty- and thirty-year remembrances. By now it was a myth, and with that realization she felt a rebellious desire to expose the truth about the fair."

She makes a bid with her bosses to spice up the Fair story with an exposé of the mayoral candidate Roger - the fabled idea-man of the Fair, contending that nobody could have done all he had done and not get dirty. And she wants to be the one to find his skeletons.

Roger, perhaps entranced a little by Helen's beauty, and challenged by her refusal to appreciate Seattle, allows her too much access to him, and disaster ensues.

Discussion: Jim Lynch knows how to draw you in, charm you, and take you to places you never thought would be so interesting, much like his main character Roger. His optimism and enthusiasm are infectious up to the very last pages of the book, when Roger, in a Molly Bloom-esque soliloquy, imagines the promise ahead for the city. ("Yes, yes, yes!" he repeatedly cries.)

When Roger talks about "how the city dazzles him, how he can't resist reading its history again and again, how sometimes he sees the whole city – past, present and future – all at once and how this almost overwhelms him"; when he describes his entrancement over the shimmering electric lights of the night skyline or what it's like to see the sun drop over the Olympics in the early evening; when he conveys his excitement about all Seattle could accomplish, you can't help visualizing it with him, and comparing his exuberant panegyrics to Woody Allen's slow, dreamy, and artistic reveries of New York and Paris. What captivates Lynch, unlike that which inspires Allen, is movement, excitement, growth, change, a "brash metropolis surrounded by postcard summits and all that boat-loving water." And Lynch's Baedeker guide to the streets and buildings and stores and restaurants make you want to take your book, go to Seattle, and *look! Just look!* at all he is teaching you to see.

Interestingly, as forthcoming as Roger is about his city, we don't learn much about Roger himself. He is a charismatic man who knows everyone, but few people really know him. In fact, there is a rather poignant scene at one point in which Helen and a photographer go to his apartment, and Helen is astonished to see how little there is in it, and how unlike it is from the seemingly larger-than-life man who inhabits it.

One of the few ways we do get a glimpse into Roger's nature is by his interactions with some of the many celebrities who flock to the Fair. They recognize the difference between the dignitaries who claim credit for the Fair and the man who actually made it happen. The inclusion of historical figures and invention of new ones also seemed to me to be part of the author's meta-message about how easy it is to bend the truth, or to "line up a whole bunch of truths about anyone and still miss the ones that really matter." As Roger tells Helen, "Most people barely know themselves...much less their wives and friends. And with strangers, we're all guessing." The newspaper stories that target Roger are particularly prone to these fallacies, as well as to the general problem of taking facts out of context.

As elusive as "truth" is, what is *perceived* as truth has remarkable staying power. Lynch uses an epigraph by Elvis Presley from whence comes the title of the book: "Truth is like the sun. You can shut it out for a time, but it ain't going away." The Janus-faced nature of "truth" is put into relief by setting it against the journalist's craft, a juxtaposition that permeates the story. At the end, even we the readers don't know the whole truth about Roger, but we also have learned that it is perceptions and innuendos that matter more anyway.

Evaluation: Jim Lynch is a talented and versatile writer who infuses the everyday with magic and then challenges you to do so yourself. With elegance and passion, he makes his landscapes come alive; they

become as important as the characters who invariably love them. His characters strive to know all about *where* they are, and to see all there is with an open mind and an unjaded eye.

Leslie says

Finally, a novel set in a city other than New York. The plot was so-so, but the writing was good, and the mentions of the Space Needle, the Bremerton ferry, the University of Washington, Queen Anne's Hill, the monorail, the Olympia brewery, the Pike Place Market, and so many other places, made this book a worthwhile trip down memory lane for me.

Amy says

Ambition and corruption, power and politics, the boom and bust times of a city are all elements of Jim Lynch's latest novel Truth Like the Sun. Set in Seattle in 1962 and 2011, the novel explores the resiliency of the city. In 1962 the eyes of the world are on Seattle as it hosts the World's Fair. The theme of the fair is focuses on the promises of the future; the monorail, the Space Needle, the microwave oven and the gains being made in the scientific world are all to be featured. Meanwhile the Cold War is being waged, Cuba is making threats of nuclear attack on the US, and families are constructing bomb shelters. Roger Morgan, the Father of the Fair, while aware of all of these things is determined to put the Fair and his beloved city of Seattle on the map. Young and somewhat idealistic Morgan is a self made man, desperate to make something of himself, but with secrets in his past he would rather not confront. When he unwittingly becomes involved in the corruption and back room deals that have built the city and in fact helped to bring the Fair to Seattle, Morgan is forced to examine his life and culpability in the scandals that are revealed as the Fair comes to a close. Thirty-nine years later in 2001, Helen Gulanos, a young single mother and journalist arrives in Seattle as the '90's dotcom bubble has burst and the city has once again fallen into despair. Gulanos is assigned an anniversary story on the Fair and happened to be present when Morgan announces his bid for Mayor. Her story then shifts to exposing Morgan's past, and the two are forced to confront their own truths. Beautifully executed, complete with flawed but likable characters, Truth Like the Sun is an entertaining look at the city of Seattle as well as personal aspirations and truth.

B the BookAddict says

'Hard-nosed yet profoundly humane' is cover description for this book and one that I would have applied myself. It is listed on the New York Times Best Books of 2012 and has won critical acclaim. Set in two moments of recent history just prior to times when America lost her innocence; 1962 in the shadow of the looming Cuba missile crisis and 2001 in the months preceding 9/11 although the story does not deal with either subject directly. It does not matter that I was not even born in '62, Lynch's research is so thorough, I might as well have been because when reading this novel, I truly felt I was in Seattle at that time.

In 1962, it is the opening of the World Fair and the Space Needle in Seattle and we meet it's mastermind, Roger Morgan. In the front page story of the novel's fictitious Seattle paper Post-Intelligencer "*He's ambitious, photogenic, courteous and agnostic... He has advised Boeing and Microsoft and five of the last six mayors. He's arguably played as much of a background or foreground role in shaping this city as anyone*

else alive." His dream has come to fruition and he's running on adrenalin. Everyone who is anyone is coming; JFK, Elvis, Count Basie, LBJ, senators, world leaders and the tourists are arriving in their thousands. In the background, he's still the go-to guy for the smooth operation of the day and in the foreground, everyone wants to shake his hand. But Roger has problems of his own, he's engaged to Linda who he really doesn't want to marry and is tending to his eighty year old mother and he's trying to find his son.

In 2001, there's Helen, single mother, new to Seattle and new investigative reporter at Post-Intelligencer and she's trying to land a big story. But her editor assigns her a retrospective to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of Seattle's World Fair and here she discovers the golden boy, Roger Morgan and it just happens that Roger may be hiding something. Meanwhile, Roger has just decided to run for major; Seattle has come through the failure of the dot.com industry but they still have Bill Gates and Microsoft and of course, Boeing. On her own volition, Helen decides to uncover the *real* man behind the Roger Morgan image. In doing so, she unearths a hidden story of graft within the police force, building industry corruption, seemingly shady deals involving the World Fair and she meets a source whose information is about to bust the whole thing wide open again.

The chapters in 1962 are electric and you find yourself nearly panting at Morgan's pace. Similarly, in 2001, Helen's race to unearth the facts of her story, get it written and printed before the mayoral election is gripping. A former reporter himself, Lynch displays his talents as an exceptionally good author in keeping the excitement and tension alive until the very end. An extremely well crafted and fast paced novel; Lynch has extensively researched the events and brings them to life. Although Roger and Helen are creations of the author, the other characters are all real people and this adds to the story's brilliance. In one word, this novel is '**alive**'. 4.5★

Dorothy says

"I don't have a plan," Elvis volunteers. "I just have a feel. Trying to get a better understanding of myself. The mistakes I make always come back around. **Truth is like the sun, isn't it?** You can shut it out for a time, but it ain't going away."

That snippet from a conversation between Roger Morgan and Elvis Presley in September 1962 gives Jim Lynch's novel its title and is a quick summation of the plot. Indeed, it could be the summation of the plot of many novels and many lives. The mistakes that we make always seem to come back around, often when we least expect them.

The place is Seattle. The novel switches back and forth between the time of the World's Fair that took place there in 1962 and the year 2001, a time of other momentous events. The man most responsible for the Fair's success was Roger Morgan, the mastermind of it all. It was an event that transformed the city from a sleepy outpost of the past to a place that embraced the future and was a magnet for farsighted thinkers. And Roger was the promoter that brought it all together and made it happen. He was brash and daring as he scrambled about trying to amass the funds to build the iconic Space Needle and all the other pavilions and exhibits. He was dubbed the unofficial mayor of Seattle. He was the man that everyone wanted a piece of.

Forty years later, he is still promoting Seattle, and at 70 years old, he suddenly decides to run to become the mayor for real of his city.

In 2001, reporter Helen Gulanos is new to the city. An investigative reporter with the *Post-Intelligencer*, she has come here to try to make a journalistic reputation for herself. She is a young single mother trying to raise a pre-school aged son and to make a life for them in a city that she doesn't really know or understand. As fate would have it, she just happens to be present when Roger Morgan announces his decision to run for mayor and her journalistic instincts begin to twitch. She intuits that there is an interesting story here, perhaps one that has not been told, and she determines to tell it.

In digging for her story, Helen begins to find the name of the beloved legend Roger Morgan turning up in some unsavory places - namely in stories of mid-century real-estate scandals, graft, and gambling - and what may have started out as a human interest story takes on the tones of a political expose'. Moreover, it is an expose' being produced under time pressure as the mayoral primary looms.

It also emerges that Helen herself has some secrets she would prefer not to be widely known and it seems that the object of her investigation has an uncanny knowledge and understanding of those secrets. And yet each of these individuals, who may be seen as adversaries, also has a grudging admiration for the style of the other and a sympathy for the problems facing him/her.

I greatly enjoyed Jim Lynch's two previous novels set in the Northwest, *Border Songs* and *The Highest Tide*, but, frankly, I found it difficult to really get "into" this one. The two main characters didn't really grab me at first and I was about two-thirds of the way through before their fates began to somewhat interest me. In fact, even at the end, I was still trying to make up my mind about them.

This novel is a time-traveler. It exists in 1962 at the time of the Cuban missile crisis and also in 2001, ending on September 10. Perhaps the message is that everyday sins and tragedies are dwarfed and overwhelmed by the tide of time and events. But, in fact, the truth is like the sun and it isn't going away forever. It always returns. Even in rainy Seattle.

Julie Christine says

As a native Washingtonian (yes, we *do* exist), Seattle was long the city of my dreams. I have lived in magnificent and unforgettable places on four continents, yet none of my fond memories of those lands compares to the deep affection I have for Seattle, the first place in nearly forty years of wandering which truly feels like home. And home it has been, since December 2007.

In other words, I dig this town and I dig reading about it. So I'm pretty darn predisposed to wax poetic about a novel that details with the eye of an insider Seattle's rise from a dumpy port town to the glittering Emerald City of hi-tech, high literacy and high-octane coffee. Toss in living history, hard-boiled newspaper reporters, hints of graft, Elvis and quirky bits that only a true Seattleite would get and buddy, you've got yourself a reader.

So, I liked this. I really did. This is when a half-star would come in handy. But I wasn't swept away.

The story alternates between the 1962 World's Fair - when our beloved icon, the Space Needle, first began rotating - and Seattle in 2001, after the tech bust dulled the city's lustre. The contemporary saga, which unfolds in the shadow of the Monica Lewinsky debacle and the travesty of the 2000 presidential election, feels anachronistic. I think the sense of urgency of the scandal is lost on me. The central premise - that a long-ago city hero who suddenly tosses in his hat for mayor may have forty-year-old political skeletons in his closet - just doesn't strike my jaded heart as all that compelling. And the writing is a bit pokey, as well - particularly the 1962 scenes.

A solid good read, but as I pull out adjectives from the jacket blurbs: *mesmerizing, hugely entertaining, powerful, devastating*, I think "Hmm...not so much." If I want to feel mesmerized, entertained, awed and devastated, I'll bike down to Shilshole Bay and gaze out at the Olympic Mountains. And know that I live in a most spectacular place. True 'dat. Even without the sun.

Dan says

Hot damn. I really liked this book. As a result I don't have a lot to say about it. It's so much easier to trash a bad book then to laud a good one.

So here's a sentence I quite liked from page 16:

Her eyes panned the glistening skyline as a cruise ship peeled away from the waterfront like an entire city block calving into the bay.

Pretty great, eh? I'd recommend this book to just about anyone, especially those with a fondness of Seattle.
