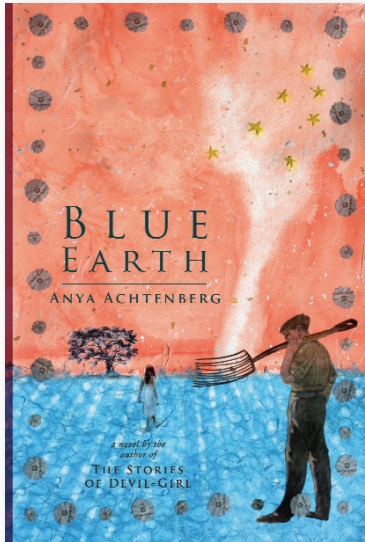


Discover a cultural and psychological journey of tragedy and redemption as rich as the landscape of America itself.



“Sold,” the auctioneer sang out as Carver looked up, “to the man in the fine suede jacket.” Carver turned to where the red-faced man directed, and saw the jacket, but did not see the man. The carousel began to whirl again, and the stars over the faraway red tent were shining in Carver’s eyes. The jacket walked up to the podium, took a sheaf of papers and shook the auctioneer’s hand. Carver breathed deep the fragrance of hay and approaching night, and saw the man’s face and understood. He was just a man, a man in a suede jacket, who owned his farm now.

A Search
for Truth

Blue Earth is a compelling novel of Minnesota, a land that guards its secrets. Carver Heinz loses both farm and family in the farm crisis of the 1980s. Displaced into urban Minneapolis, he becomes obsessed with Angie, a beautiful child he rescues from a tornado in an encounter he insists they keep silent. Her close friendship with a Dakota Indian boy fuels Carver’s rage and unleashes a series of events that reveal the haunting power of each character’s past and of their shared histories, especially the 1862 Dakota Conflict and public hanging of 38 Dakota—the largest mass execution in U.S. history.

~ ~ ~

“In the great tradition of Willa Cather and Wallace Stegner, Anya Achtenberg writes of the violence, both past and present, that shapes the people of the vast American Midwest. It is a story of bloodshed, loss, despair and the search for redemption. Deep and searing, *Blue Earth* is perhaps one of the best novels of the past decade.”

—Kathleen Spivack, author *With Robert Lowell and His Circle: Plath, Sexton, Bishop, Kunitz et al.*

“Psychologically and politically penetrating, *Blue Earth* portrays the frailties and quiet triumphs of contemporary individuals coping with their own loss of land, family, and culture against a historical backdrop of unacknowledged violence and theft. Characters that are often both victim and perpetrator operate with complex humanity amidst the wide scope of Achtenberg’s vision. This book is, put simply, magnificent.”

—Christine Stark, author *Nickels: A Tale of Dissociation*

FOR AN INTERVIEW REQUEST or
MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
Victor Volkman 888-761-6268
victor@LHPress.com

BLUE EARTH
Anya Achtenberg / August 2012
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Anya Achtenberg: Writer and Teacher

Anya Achtenberg is an award-winning fiction writer and poet. Her publications include the novel *Blue Earth*, with an excerpt in *Harvard Review*, and autobiographical novella *The Stories of Devil-Girl*, both with Modern History Press, and *The Stone of Language* (poetry), published by West End Press after being finalist in five poetry competitions. Her short fiction has received awards from

About the Author

Coppola's *Zoetrope: All-Story*, *New Letters*, the Raymond Carver Story Contest, and others.

She is at work on *History Artist*, a novel centering in a Cambodian woman born of an African American father and Cambodian mother at the moment the U.S. bombing of Cambodia began. This work received a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board. She is also writing a book of poetry and short prose, *The Matadors at the Crossing*.

Anya teaches creative workshops and classes around the country and online with growing international participation, and offers manuscript consultations and coaching for fiction writers, poets, and memoirists. She has been working to bring Cuban cinema to the U.S., and organizes arts-focused trips to Cuba. Along with her numerous fiction and memoir workshops, she developed and teaches a series of multi-genre workshops on *Writing for Social Change (Re-Dream a Just World; Place and Exile/Borders and Crossings; and Yearning and Justice: Writing the Unlived Life.)*

Visit Anya at www.AnyaAchtenberg.com

Suggested Interview Questions

1. How did this Minnesota story come to you, a refugee's daughter raised in housing projects in Brooklyn, New York?
2. How does *Blue Earth* have particular appeal for both women and men?
3. What does this story of diverse characters say about building true family and community, and dealing with conflict in a multicultural world?
4. Various acts and forms of violence run through *Blue Earth*. How does this relate to the book's exploration of a kind of "walking amnesia" about the past?
5. How does *Blue Earth* portray the connections between the Midwest Farm Crisis of the 1980s, and the 1862 Dakota Conflict and mass execution at Mankato?
6. How can fiction such as *Blue Earth* be of use beyond the literary world in the long and difficult process of working on the legacy of America's sometimes brutal history?
7. Cancer plays a major role in the character of Barb, Angie's mother. What connections are there among her illness, her farm and factory work, and women's issues?
8. How did the results of your research find their way into the fictional world of *Blue Earth*?
9. Discuss how the story is told by an omniscient narrator who is neighbor, social commentator, and a voice in the earth.

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Victor Volkman 734-417-4266
victor@LHPress.com

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