



Junebug

Maureen McCoy

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"I was raised zero-parent," says hormone-addled 17-year-old Junebug Host, "what the newspapers call it when your mother is in prison and the father was just a sperm."

Junebug has been visiting her mother in Ellisville Reformatory for Women ever since she was five years-old, when beauty queen Theresa Host calmly stepped out of their trailer with an axe and inexplicably bludgeoned a neighbor to death. But during the summer of Junebug's high school graduation—and the summer of her first wildly passionate affair—with a snake-smooth greaser 20 years her senior—Theresa reels in her oversexed daughter, and shatters her world, by suddenly announcing the motive she had kept to herself since the day of the murder: an act of vengeance for a crime in which Junebug was intimately involved. "I did it for you," she tells Junebug, who is thrown into a ferment of memory and guilt.

Set in the outsized landscape of far-western Nebraska, a nebulous region little known in contemporary fiction, and peopled by characters whose extreme individuality is exceeded only by their eccentricity—born again Fundamentalist snake charmers, housewives making ends meet with phone sex 900-number businesses, a 300-pound New Age priestess and the traveling meat salesman who worships her, as well as the all-female inmate population of the Ellisville Reformatory, *Junebug* is a novel with the intensity of the mother/daughter bond itself, with all its wildness, tragedy and depth.

Maureen McCoy is the author of three previous novels, *Diving Blood*, *Summertime*, and *Walking After Midnight* (Poseiden/Simon & Schuster). She received her MFA from the Writers Workshop, University of Iowa, and is a Professor of English at Cornell. Among her many awards are the James Michener Award, the Wurlitzer Foundation Award, and the Albert Schweitzer Fellowship in the Humanities, chosen by Toni Morrison.

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