



Baroque-a-Nova

Kevin Chong

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"An excellent first novel. Chong captures teen angst with white-hot, dead-on language. . . . Sensitive, wry observations remind the reader of Holden Caulfield in J. D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*." (*The Montreal Gazette*)

During the week following the death of his long-absent famous folksinger mother, Saul St. Pierre must contend with the TV crews, fans, and assorted oddballs who flood the suburb where he lives, even as he struggles to understand his mother's reasons for taking her own life-and for abandoning him years before.

It doesn't help matters that his stepmother, Jana, the only reliable adult he's ever known, is dating a cop who wants to marry her. And he and his friend Navi are suspended from school for staging a demonstration against censorship. Then there is the arrival of the two young women from New York, inspired by the St. Pierres' nostalgia boom, who come to worship at the feet of Saul's father, an alcohol-guzzling musical has-been.

But this is no mere tale of motherless youth, because Kevin Chong eschews the melodramatic and familiar to create an inspired-and sometimes absurd-coming-of-age story that embraces the unexpected poetry of tacky pop culture and marginal celebrity. And whether *Baroque-a-Nova* is read as a "witty postmodern farce" (*The Globe and Mail*) or a "deftly shaped, deceptively simple story about a boy poised on the threshold of manhood" (*The Vancouver Sun*), it is, to its very core, about love, forgiveness, and the search for truth and beauty in our junked-up lives

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