

Advance Praise for
Hieroglyphics

A Novel

Jill McCorkle

“*Hieroglyphics* is a powerful, deeply moving testament to both the ties of family and the taut fragility of memory's plumb-line. Shelley, Harvey, Lil and Frank felt so real that it seemed as if I had known them for many years; this book stayed with me well beyond the last page.”

—Daniel Mason, author of *The Winter Soldier*

“Engrossing . . . McCorkle finds an elegant mix of wistfulness and appreciation for life . . . Throughout, McCorkle weaves a powerful narrative web, with empathy for her characters and keen insight on their motivations. This is a gem.”

—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

"Demonstrating her widely recognized skill at creating memorable stories out of the stuff of daily life, McCorkle's empathy for a quartet of unassuming but appealing characters provides the foundation for a novel whose drama is modest, but whose insight is deep. Jill McCorkle is an unfussy writer whose storytelling skill almost gives the impression she's simply eavesdropping on her character's lives. It's that quiet talent that makes *Hieroglyphics* a novel whose appeal will only enlarge in the reader's mind with the passage of time."

—*Shelf Awareness*

"Ingenious . . . Gathers layers like a snowball racing downhill before striking us in the heart with blunt, icy force."

—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

“*Hieroglyphics* is a novel that tugs at the deepest places of the human soul—a beautiful, heart piercing meditation on life and death and the marks we leave on this world. It is the work of a wonderful writer at her finest and most profound.”

—Jessica Shattuck, author of *The Women in the Castle*

Hieroglyphics

A Novel

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In her latest novel, Jill McCorkle invites readers to travel back in time through the memories of Lil and Frank, a retired couple who recently moved from Boston to live near their daughter in North Carolina. Lil's mind drifts from thought to thought as she fills journal after journal with her memories that continue to slip away. Frank, finally ready to face his past, is determined to visit the home he grew up in, hoping to uncover treasures once hidden away.

Frank's former home is now occupied by Shelley, a recently divorced, single mom trying to raise her young son, Harvey. She is taunted by her past mixed with the horrors of her present job as a court stenographer. Knowing the unimaginable crimes committed everyday convinces her that she shouldn't let Frank into her home, no matter how innocent his request may seem. Harvey is haunted by stories from the past, told to him by his older brother, Jason, now away at college. He believes he sees a ghost in their home at night. Shelley's not convinced he's wrong.

Frank's innocent attempts to visit his former home unknowingly trigger forgotten memories hidden deep in Shelley's past. The parallels between these two families, both haunted by their own family secrets, ripple through time. While Lil pieces together a history for her children to hold onto, Shelley pushes back on the pressing memories of her own family. Afterall, not all parents are ones you wish to remember.

In an essay Jill McCorkle wrote about *Hieroglyphics*, she said, "I was thinking of each of these characters in terms of the mark they leave on the world they inhabit, from the most visible and easily discerned knowledge to the tiniest keepsake or scrap of paper to what is consigned only to memory and perhaps never revealed. It is an endless excavation, each discovered item carrying its own story."

About the Author: Jill McCorkle's first two novels were released simultaneously when she was just out of college, and the *New York Times* called her "a born novelist." Since then, she has published six novels and four collections of short stories, and her work has appeared in *Best American Short Stories* several times, as well as *The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction*. Five of her books have been *New York Times Notable* books, and her most recent novel, *Life After Life*, was a *New York Times* bestseller. She has received the New England Booksellers Award, the John Dos Passos Prize for Excellence in Literature, and the North Carolina Award for Literature. She is currently a faculty member of the Bennington College Writing Seminars and is affiliated with the MFA program at North Carolina State University.

Hieroglyphics: A Novel (320p)

Jill McCorkle

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