

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### A NOTE FROM LEAH WEISS

My roots are deep, simple and southern. They begin in the flatlands of North Carolina where I was born and where my mama was born. They stretch to the Blue Ridge of Virginia where my daddy's people lived, and where I've lived the last four decades. I was influenced by mama's upbringing and her ability to see rich where others saw poor. My daddy's people were the artists, my granddad a violinist, my namesake Leah a talent who designed her own clothes, upholstered elaborate furniture, and laid a brick patio by herself. Both sides of my family were self-sufficient and hard-working, with modest dreams and high standards.

Besides my roles as daughter, wife and mother, I've been a music teacher, secretary, and school teacher. I worked for a magazine and sold Shaklee products for twenty years. Then I was the executive assistant to four Headmasters at a private school. In my mid-fifties I embraced the craft of writing and started with a subject close to my heart: my mama, Lucy. She was child number twelve in a family of fifteen, raised on a tobacco farm with no running water or electricity. In 2005, after work, I would "interview" mama and captured half a dozen stories before she died of lung cancer—"caught with my pants down," said the girl from a tobacco farm who never believed smoking was bad until it was too late. On the heels of my mother's death, my love Jim died of esophageal cancer and I was left with huge voids in my life. I filled those solitary hours learning to write fiction, attending writing conferences and workshops, haunting bookstores and scrutinizing the magic of my favorite authors (Austin, Steinbeck, Buck, Pilcher, Angelou, Kingsolver). I cut my writing teeth on a novel that didn't sell and a string of short stories that did.

In 2015 I retired from my day job and signed with a New York agent, then a publisher. I had found my writing voice in *If the Creek Don't Rise*. It is southern, musical and best enjoyed when read aloud. Always my stories are about people who are self-sufficient and hard-working, with humble dreams—for they are my roots.

This stretch of life is sweetened by my husband Dave Harpster who came late to me after a long solo stretch. Dave is the consummate partner. He supports and enables my bliss and has played a major role in my writing a second novel which will be published in 2021. Without him, my joy would exist, but it would be exponentially smaller.