

Abstract for “The Fall Line and Other Stories” by Carly Gates

“The Fall Line and Other Stories,” a collection of five pieces of short fiction, explores women’s perspectives throughout several decades and ideas related to reproductive rights, feminist issues, and loss. These stories capture the characters’ darkest moments and love them there—where they are most broken.

The first story in the collection, “The Drowned Meadow,” centers on a mother whose only son was recently born with Down Syndrome. The main character Dolores struggles between loving her son for who he is or giving in to what both her family wants and what society dictated in the early 1950s: giving him up to be raised in a home.

“The Fall Line” begins with a pregnant teenager losing agency over her life as she is shipped off to live with family in rural Georgia in the 1960s. As she slowly learns to see the pregnancy and the baby as something belonging to her, she gains the confidence she needs to desire her own child.

“The Mountain Underwater” tells the story of a young mother trapped in a marriage and life she never wanted in the late 1970s. She struggles to accept her own daughter’s success and competitive nature without jealousy and resentment.

“The Holopaw Monster” is about a mother who struggles with her adult son, who is on house arrest, and her unconditional love for and support of him despite the abuse of his girlfriend.

“Oh, Fix Me, Fix Me,” a modular story, is the final piece in the collection. A young woman dealing with the immediate loss of her cat is propelled through her grief from the loss of her lover to drug abuse and addiction.