

Praise for *The Weight of Snow and Regret*

It is 1968, and Vermont is threatening to shut down the Sheldon Poor Farm, the last such poorhouse in the state, where residents find solidarity and dignity among others who have fallen upon hard times. Liz Gauffreau tells the story of the poorhouse—and more importantly, the stories of its inimitable cast of characters—rendering the inner lives of the residents and the hard particulars of their circumstances with grace, compassion, and humanity. Here, under the stoic, unflinching hand of Hazel and her husband Paul, who manage the poorhouse, they find refuge, a small space for healing and salvation. Gauffreau brings the characters, the tumultuous milieu of the late sixties, and the beauty of small-town New England to poignant, vivid life.

—Carol LaHines, author of *The Vixen Amber Holloway*

Liz Gauffreau writes with an unflinching yet compassionate voice that brings Louisa May Alcott, John Steinbeck, and Barbara Kingsolver to mind without compromising its uniqueness. The setting is a hidden, little talked about phenomena, a piece of uncelebrated Americana—the poor farm. Brought by dire circumstances to spend their days as orphans of the state, fed, and surprisingly to this reader, well-cared for, I was gripped by the fascinating eccentricities and life experiences of each character in this novel, from the lonely Louisiana housewife who was so drawn to Lightnin’ Hopkins’ music and all that the blues awakened in her that she ran away from her family and found a new one at the Poor Farm, to Hazel and Paul who run the home with a compassionate yet frequently conflicted hand. This novel is beautifully woven together—a mosaic of heart wrenching miseries mixed with surprising and fleeting moments of joy.

—Joyce Yarrow, author of *Zahara and the Lost Books of Light*

The Weight of Snow and Regret by Elizabeth Gauffreau is a masterpiece. In this novel, Gauffreau writes a compelling historical fiction narrative of the conditions of people in the Sheldon Poor Farm in Vermont in 1968. She not only captures their specific lives but also the zeitgeist of that stormy time. This book stands alongside John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath* and Barbara Kingsolver’s *Demon Copperhead* in its power and demonstration of the lives of people whom the larger society often either ignores or forgets.

—Charles French, PhD, Professor of English

Gauffreau has peopled her story with a rich cross section of the needy, from Joey, the perpetual optimist, to Flossie, the wheelchair-ridden ninety-year-old castoff mother, to Petey, the mentally challenged lover of his mare. The residents of the Sheldon Poor Farm (don’t you dare call them “inmates”) provide a challenging and heartbreaking reminder of homelessness that surrounds all of us today. When the call for cost savings arrives, an action that is forecast from the beginning, resulting in the closing of the final poorhouse, we, the readers, thanks to the care and comfort provided by Hazel, Paul, and Dwight, cannot help but realize that we have lost something of immense importance. The divesting of the residents by county and state officials is one of the most moving sequences that I have encountered from the written word.

—Kenneth Robbins, AWP Novel Prize Winner