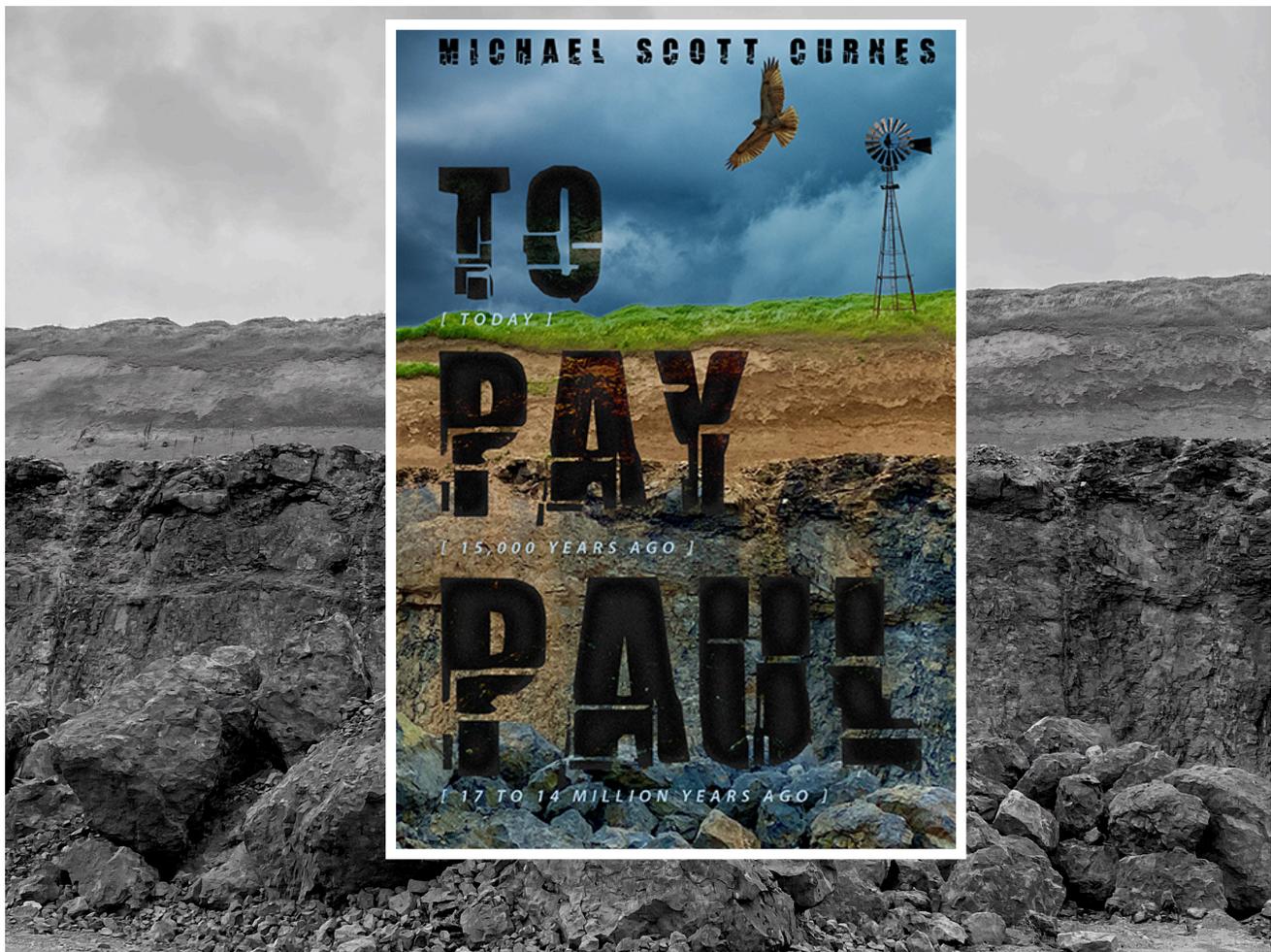


INTRODUCING, FROM DOWN WIND PRESS . . .

*An eco-thriller 17 million years in the making*

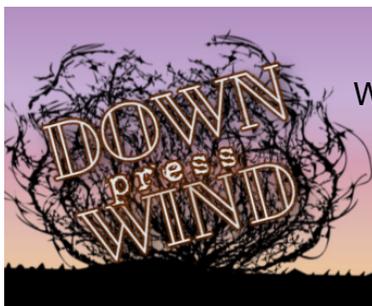


**A story from our region, for our times, and a glimpse into what happens  
when longstanding environmental debts start coming due.**

A new novel from award winning American Canadian author, Michael Scott Curnes

[www.michaelscottcurnes.com](http://www.michaelscottcurnes.com)

Pub Date: July 1, 2022 | Available Now in Paperback, Hard Cover and eBook | Published by: Down Wind Press  
ISBN 978-1-7772988-5-2 | 274 pages | Featuring the poetry of late poet and Hanford activist, William Witherup



**ABOUT Down Wind Press:**

We are a small, Cascadia-based independent press focused on producing environmental fiction that broadens public awareness and provokes readers to take action in defence of our imperiled planet.

## REVIEWS FOR TO PAY PAUL . . .

reader  Views



“To Pay Paul” is a nuanced and complex snippet in time of Seamus Quinlan’s life. Set primarily on the Quinlan farm, the story runs readers through the gauntlet of emotions as Seamus loses his last living relative. In the process of burying his father, he makes new friends, becomes closer to those he already knows, and discovers himself and his voice in the process.

Hanford Nuclear Site, housed within the state of Washington, has a dark legacy. From its role in creating the bombs used to end the United States’ involvement in WWII, to the decades of contamination and nuclear testing that poisoned the residents of the town, author Michael Scott Curnes uses the page to not only bring to light the atrocities of Hanford that occurred in real life, but weaves an impassioned tale of discovering one’s self, in a literal hole. “To Pay Paul” does not shy away from hard conversations, LGBTQ+ themes, and underrepresented matters. Curnes creates a nuanced character in Seamus Quinlan, disguised within a simplistic upbringing, full of heartbreak.

The Quinlan family has always been fraught with death. Being downwind from the nuclear plant, with generations of family having called themselves Hanford employees, cancer is always on Seamus’ mind. With a career in analyzing rocks and soils as a member of the Hanford geophysicist team, Seamus is relied upon for cleaning up any spills, handling collapses caused by the recent earthquakes, and theorizing future geological events. In this role, Seamus partners closely with the local dams to ensure the toxicity of Hanford’s waste are not disrupted by dam failures. It is through these partnerships Seamus befriends Cody. Cody is just a voice on the phone Seamus encounters frequently through work, but with a wife of his own succumbing to cancer, Cody is no stranger to death and heartbreak. Propelling their friendship to new heights, Cody stops by to check on Seamus after the loss of his father and offers to help him lower the casket into the hole, albeit his motives may have been more than meets the eye, this simple gesture results in the unfolding of an extraordinary read, full of Seamus’ knowledge, Cody’s compassion, and mother nature’s unfolding.

Curnes has crafted a truly remarkable and distinguishable read. Laced with bits of truth and waves of sadness and hope, “To Pay Paul” stems from humans’ inability to stop robbing Peter, told amidst a beautiful background.

## REVIEWS FOR TO PAY PAUL . . .



*Seamus Quinlan, a geophysicist who works at an abandoned nuclear site, must cope with both physical and emotional fallout in a gripping story that is part thriller, part psychological novel. Longtime residents of Washington State, the Quinlan family has been decimated by the radioactive pollution at HEW, a Manhattan Project site that still holds secrets. Now, Seamus is trying to ensure the long-term safety of radioactive waste, until a potentially fatal accident forces Seamus and his engineer friend, Cody, to take stock of their lives, as their situation becomes a metaphor for the pair's own personal issues, the precarious state of the region, and the history of the Quinlan family.*

*Curnes (author of *For the Love of Mother*, to which this is a sequel) grew up in that area, allowing him to paint beautiful and haunting pictures of the region. He has also painstakingly researched the geology of the zone and treats the reader to an account of the millions of years of history that carved out Washington, turning the ground itself into a character as real as any person. Although readers seeking action above all else may find the scientific detail overwhelming, Curnes' goals are more ambitious than the average thriller, as *To Pay Paul* connects the personal and the geologic in metaphoric unity.*

*Nowhere is this clearer in the scenes in which Seamus and Cody must extricate themselves from a geological disaster. The descriptions of the men coping are earthy as they essentially become part of the ground itself, and the experience gradually changes them and their relationship to each other. Their rescue is cathartic, and they gradually commit to taking their personal and professional lives in new directions, even in the face of a new geologic crisis and a final personal problem. The book ends on an elegiac note, not fully concluding the story, but satisfying nonetheless.*

*Takeaway: Fans of eco-thrillers will revel in this richly detailed story with a surprising human element.*

**Top reviews from other countries**

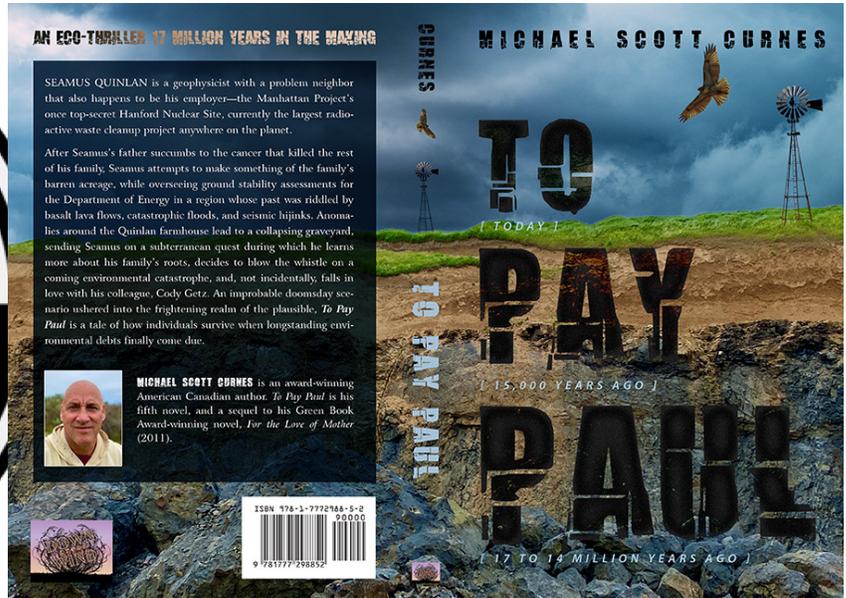
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★★★★★ Verified Purchase

**A Chilling Warning**

Reviewed in the United States on July 14, 2022

Michael Scott Curnes has brilliantly combined the horrors of Hanford with a treatise on central/eastern Washington geology, a harrowing multi-day almost-fatal accident, and a touching and all-too-human love story. A must read!



**FROM THE BACK COVER:**

Seamus Quinlan is a geophysicist with a problem neighbor that also happens to be his employer—the Manhattan Project’s once top-secret Hanford Nuclear Site, currently the largest radioactive waste cleanup project anywhere on the planet.

After Seamus’s father succumbs to the cancer that killed the rest of his family, Seamus attempts to make something of the family’s barren acreage, while overseeing ground stability assessments for the Department of Energy in a region whose past was riddled by basalt lava flows, catastrophic floods, and seismic hijinks. Anomalies around the Quinlan farmhouse lead to a collapsing graveyard, sending Seamus on a subterranean quest during which he learns more about his family’s roots, decides to blow the whistle on a coming environmental catastrophe, and, not incidentally, falls in love with his colleague, Cody Getz. An improbable doomsday scenario ushered into the frightening realm of the plausible, *To Pay Paul* is a tale of how individuals survive when longstanding environmental debts finally come due.