

RAVE REVIEWS FOR 'KNOWIN' SUGAR,' SHELLY CHATTERELLI'S DEBUT NOVEL SET IN 1940S APPALACHIA

The historical coming-of-age novel explores intuition, inheritance and belonging.

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, August 7, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- "Knowin' Sugar," the debut novel by award-winning writer and poet [Shelly Chatterelli](#), is earning enthusiastic praise for its poetic language, immersive Appalachian setting and extraordinary central character, Sugar. Published June 23 by [Fauve Press](#), the novel is available in paperback and e-book formats.

"Knowin' Sugar is a moving, endearing story about being your authentic self," writes Katrina Kittle, author of "Morning in This Broken World." "Chatterelli's imagery is sensory and precise, and her language so poetic. I was swooning on nearly every page!"

Visual and encaustic artist Therese Cook praises the novel's central character: "Sugar's voice is extraordinary. Beautifully written and deeply immersive, this is a story you don't just read—you experience. You'll feel what Sugar feels, see what she sees, and carry this book with you long after the last page."

Elaine Olund, writer, poet and author of "The Invisible Suitcase," calls the novel "richly described and full of hope." She adds, "Threaded with woodsmoke, wildflowers, and magic, Knowin' Sugar leads us on an adventure where Sugar risks everything she holds dear to be true to her heart. Reading this will break you open."

Readers have echoed that praise...

In a five-star review, Jessica Siena writes, "[Chatterelli's] use of language, both prose and verse, is so skilled and precise. The story is intimate and the characters and relationships so full of real life."





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Kresha Warnock writes, "This is a book to get lost in. The setting is lush. The characters realistic, with a little magic rolled in. I enjoyed the way the Appalachian culture and people are presented with love and dignity."

Set against the backdrop of rural Appalachia, the novel follows Sugar, a thirteen-year-old girl, whose days are filled with simple pleasures like hide-and-seek and catching crawdads. When mystical whispers revealing truths and

warnings of danger intrude, thus begins the awakening of "knowin's."

Passed down through generations of women in her family, Sugar's gift become harder to hide and put her at odds with her mother. Unable to silence the truest part of herself, even to preserve her mother's love, Sugar must confront her family's past and present to understand her gift and decide how to live with it.

An ode to the intertwined natural and human worlds of rural Appalachia, "Knowin' Sugar" delves into what it means to belong to a place and a people, while questioning the wavering line between destiny and choice.

A second-generation Appalachian, Chatterelli traces her roots to southeastern Kentucky. Drawing on her family's history and her own mother's stories, the author authentically infuses Sugar's story with the language, foodways, and folklore of Kentucky.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shelly Chatterelli is an award-winning writer and poet, a former newspaper columnist and a former commentator for NPR affiliate WKSU. A second-generation Appalachian based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, she draws inspiration from her family's deep roots in southeastern Kentucky. "Knowin' Sugar" is her debut novel.

BOOK DETAILS

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