

FICTION

EDITOR'S PICK

**Furnace Creek**

Joseph Allen Boone | Eyewear Publishing/Black Springs Press  
374p, hardcover, \$26.95, ISBN 978-1-913-60635-0

With lyric beauty, welcome frankness, and rare emotional urgency, Boone reimagines Dickens's *Great Expectations* in the American South, in the tumultuous 1960s, with a queer perspective and countless new and illuminating approaches to the material. The Pip is Newt Seward, a dreaming teenager who aspires to leave his small town rather than take over his father's Ford dealership. Newt meets his Magwitch—this time a Black woman and former maid from his neighborhood—while in the throes of self-pleasure at the titular creek. The Miss Havisham who introduces him to the possibilities of culture, wealth, and love is Julian Brewster, an aging bachelor with a library in dire need of organization, plus a set of wards around Newt's age, the gorgeous twins Mary Jo and Marky.

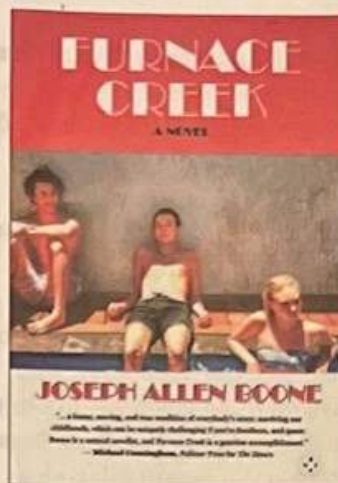
While Newt is in a hurry to grow up, Boone never rushes this stirring, sensitive telling, inviting readers to relish the languorous summer in which Newt and the twins connect, grow close, and eventually, tenderly, discover themselves and each other. (They marvel at the film *Jules et Jim*, which feels as influential to this stretch of the story as Dickens.) Boone's attentive treatment of race, class, sexuality, and culture enriches a narrative that readers might at first expect will prove familiar. It's not, exactly: *Furnace Creek* generates suspense from both Dickens's irresistible original framework and Boone's fresh vision, a Southern Gothic whose innovations are always true to the realities of class, race, and sexuality.

Exquisite prose and a storyteller's elan keep the novel engaging even as Newt, thanks to his mysterious benefactor, journeys

*A rich and exquisite re-imagining of Dickens, with a queer perspective in the mid-century American south.*

**Great for fans of**

Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*, Lee Mandelo's *Summer Sons*.



into Yankee country for private school and Harvard, the mid-century equivalent of Dickens's conception of becoming a gentleman. The identity of that benefactor might be that compelling a mystery today, but Boone more than compensates with his characterization of Newt and the twins, and compelling questions of who is teasing who—and who might truly be in love.

**PRODUCTION** Cover: A- | Design & typography: A- | Illustrations: -  
**GRADES:** Editing: A | Marketing copy: A-