



# The Trench Angel

*Michael Keenan Gutierrez*

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"In the Somme Valley a British soldier teaches his fellows to hide cigarette coals inside their mouths. Half a world away, a war-ruined photographer drinks in a bar beneath a Colorado butchery, blood dripping from the floorboards into ashtrays. Gutierrez writes with a metaphorical gift and fine hand of an age of war and upheaval where anarchists, coal barons, Pinkertons, corrupt police, broken idealists, and broken families fight to claim history's muddied field. . . . *The Trench Angel* announces a great new talent set to shine for a long time."—Alexander Parsons, *Leaving Disneyland*

"Breathes new, vivid life into the old wild west."—Mat Johnson, *Pym*

"Gutierrez's splendid debut bypasses the archives, whisking us straightaway into the seedy saloons, the twisting back alleys, and the trenches. . . . Like Denis Johnson's *Train Dreams*, this potent, lyrical novel unspools beyond its own time and lands squarely, unforgettably in our own."—Tim Horvath, *Understories*

Colorado, 1919. Photographer Neal Stephens, home from the War, is blackmailed by the sheriff over his secret marriage to a black woman in France. When the sheriff is murdered, Neal's investigation calls up memories of the trenches and his search for his dead wife, as he untangles the connections among the murder, the coalminers' strike, and his mysterious anarchist father.

**Michael Gutierrez**, MFA (fiction) and MA (history), teaches in the Department of English and Comparative Literature at UNC Chapel Hill, and has published in many literary journals. *The Trench Angel* was a finalist for the James Jones First Novel Fellowship.

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