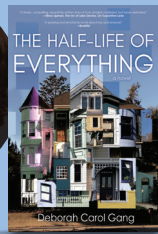


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Author Interview

**DEBORAH CAROL GANG**

*The Half-Life of Everything*

978-1-61088-233-0, Bancroft Press,  
bancroftpress.com

*An early-onset Alzheimer's diagnosis is difficult for patient and family alike. What motivated you to write this story from a spouse's perspective?*

Most of us can picture the gradual loss of our partner to illness, but what is harder to envision is what if it doesn't end? What if she is here but gone? Placing the family in purgatory allows the grieving spouse and children to be the focus. It also set me up for the welcome challenge of allowing the reader to know Kate through her family's memories of healthy Kate. Her husband and sons like to imagine pithy comments she would make, or what she would have thought of her son's derelict college rental house.

*In this version of a familiar story of loss, you tease us by envisioning what it would be like if Kate could be well again. Was it challenging to write about such a possibility?*

It's natural to think longingly of a person we've lost and at times indulge in "if only" and "what if." It was both painful and satisfying to imagine how someone would feel if they could recover from a catastrophic brain disease: embarrassment at having been so diminished, grief over what was lost, joy over reunion and rediscovery. I felt a freedom to conjecture because, as I know from being a therapist, and as I have Kate say in the novel, no one really knows how they'll respond to a big new event. We are quite bad at predicting ourselves.

*The title of the book is superb. Can you tell us why it works so well with the novel's subject matter?*

To me, at its core, all fiction is about aging, no matter which generation features in the plot. We are each somewhere along the half-life of our allotted span. We just never know for sure what exact portion is being divided and then divided again. Three generations appear in this novel, and every character is at a different and unknown point in their own half-life. In addition to the scientific definition of half-life, there is another more informal one: a brief period during which something flourishes before dying out. Could anyone describe life in fewer or more beautiful words? ♥