



Hold It 'Til It Hurts

T. Geronimo Johnson

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Finalist for the 2013 PEN/Faulkner Award

"The magnificence of *Hold It 'Til It Hurts* is not only in the prose and the story but also in the book's great big beating heart. These complex and compelling characters and the wizardry of Johnson's storytelling will dazzle and move you from first page to last. Novels don't teach us how to live but *Hold It 'Til It Hurts* will make you hush and wonder."—Anthony Swofford, author of *Jarhead*

"This rich and sophisticated first novel brings together pleasures rarely found in one book: *Hold It 'Til It Hurts* is a novel about war that goes in search of passionate love, a dreamy thriller, a sprawling mystery, a classical quest for a lost brother in which the shadowy quarry is clearly the seeker's own self, and a meditation on family and racial identity that makes its forerunners in American fiction look innocent by comparison."—Jaimy Gordon, National Book Award winner for *Lord of Misrule*

When Achilles Conroy and his brother Troy return from a tour of duty in Afghanistan, their white mother presents them with the key to their past: envelopes containing details about their respective birth parents. After Troy disappears, Achilles—always his brother's keeper—embarks on a harrowing journey in search of Troy, an experience that will change him forever.

Heartbreaking, intimate, and at times disturbing, *Hold It 'Til It Hurts* is a modern-day odyssey through war, adventure, disaster, and love, and explores how people who do not define themselves by race make sense of a world that does.

T. Geronimo Johnson was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. His fiction and poetry have appeared in *Best New American Voices*, *Indiana Review*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, and *Illuminations*, among others. A graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop and a former Stegner Fellow at Stanford University, Johnson teaches writing at the University of California-Berkeley. *Hold It 'Til It Hurts* is his first book.

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