

Reading Group Guide

Earth's Imagined Corners

Book 1 of the Round Earth Series

Tamara Linse

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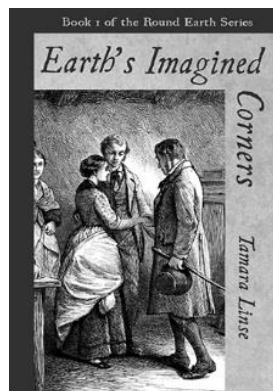


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Reading Group Guide

Earth's Imagined Corners

Tamara Linse



In 1885 Iowa, Sara Moore is a dutiful daughter, but when her father tries to force her to marry his younger partner, she must choose between the partner—a man who treats her like property—and James Youngblood—a kind man she hardly knows who has a troubled past. When she confronts her father, he beats her and turns her out of the house, breaking all ties, so she decides to elope with James to Kansas City with hardly a penny to their names. In the tradition of Willa Cather's *O Pioneers!* and Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, *Earth's Imagined Corners* is a novel that comprehends the great kindnesses and violences we do to each

other.

The author Tamara Linse jokes that she was raised in the 1880s, and so it was natural for her to set a book there. She is the author of the short story collection *How to Be a Man* and the novel *Deep Down Things* and earned her master's in English from the University of Wyoming, where she taught writing. Her work appears in the *Georgetown Review*, *South Dakota Review*, and *Talking River*, among others, and she was a finalist for an *Arts & Letters* and *Glimmer Train* contests, as well as the Black Lawrence Press Hudson Prize for a book of short stories. She works as an editor for a foundation and a freelancer. Find her online at tamaralinse.com and her blog *Writer, Cogitator, Recovering Ranch Girl* at tamara-linse.blogspot.com.

Letter from the Author

Dear Reader,

What should I say about *Earth's Imagined Corners*? There's so much to tell.

This is the first book I wrote, and the first novel. I had been writing my whole life, but it wasn't until 1999 that I claimed "writer" and began writing lots of fiction. I almost immediately tried to write a novel—this novel.

Very quickly, I realized fiction is one long resistance against writing the first thing that comes to mind, against cliché, and that I knew nothing about writing fiction, not really. And so I continued to work on the novel but then I also wrote loads of short stories. Short stories are so demanding, little diamonds that demand perfection, and that taught me so much about writing. These stories became the collection *How to Be a Man*.

I wrote on and off for years and finally achieved a first draft. Then I got feedback from some very patient writing friends, though the manuscript had a long way to go. They were insightful

but very kind, as true writing friends are. Then I tried to get an agent, with minimal interest. When I say minimal, I really do mean minimal. And so I put it away and wrote another novel, which is *Deep Down Things*. After 11 years, I got my lovely agent, and then we queried publishers with both the novels. In the process, I majorly rewrote them both—again, from scratch, just keeping the plot. *Earth's Imagined Corners* almost turned into two novels, but I really felt the parts needed to remain together. Then, after feedback from my agent, *Earth's Imagined Corners* was shaped into final form.

The story is based on the lives of my great grandparents, Frank and Ellen Strong. Ellen Noble grew up in Iowa, while Frank grew up in Illinois under the name “Frank Wood” and moved across the country with his mother, Elizabeth Zenana Robinson Maettison Wood Strong Howard Staats. She was born in Virginia, and family legend says she danced at Tom Thumb’s wedding, married five times, and died in Red Willow County, Nebraska. She’s an elusive figure, and I had a heck of a time tracking her down through geneology. I still know very little about her.

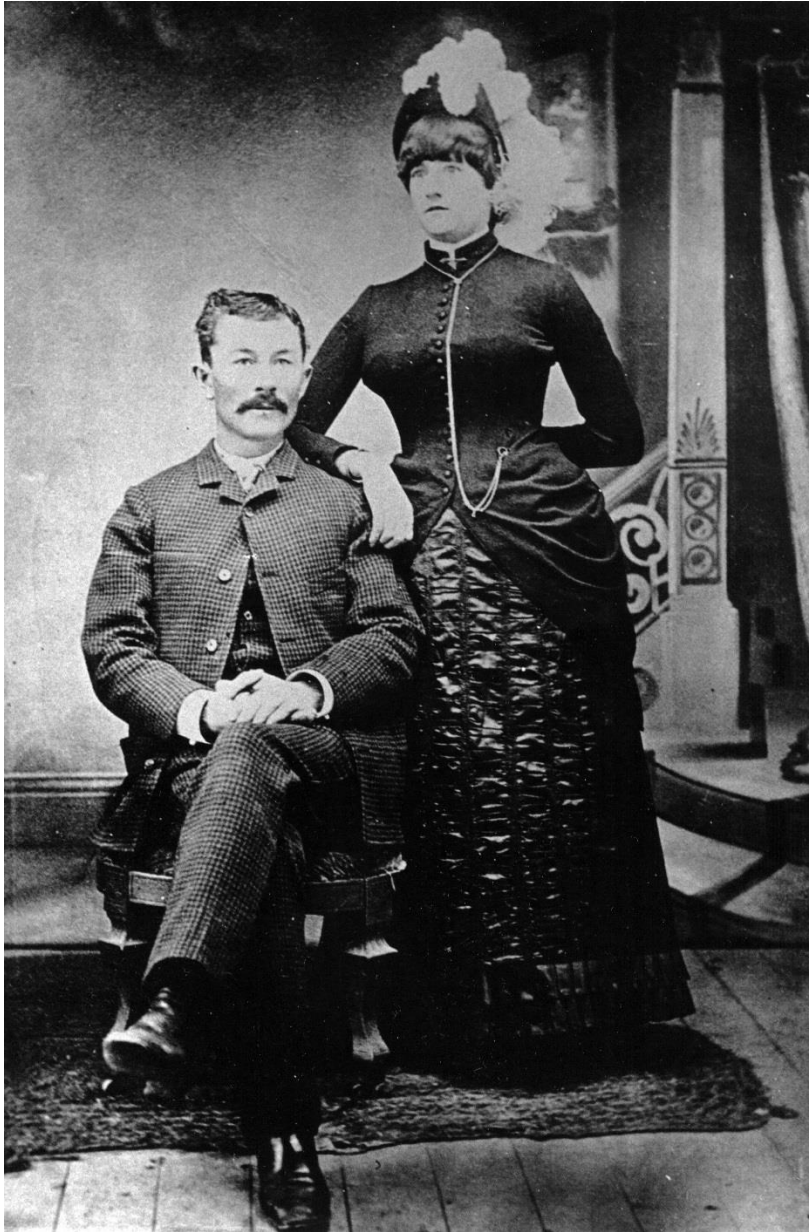
Legend also says that Frank worked for an uncle for a year and was not paid, and so that’s why he stole two horses and was sentenced to the Additional Penitentiary in Anamosa. Family legend turned out to be true. This is from the records of the penitentiary.

A. Henry Zierjacks being sworn testified as follows, am 33 years of age, reside Franklin Twshp. Bremer Co., a farmer, have known Frank Wood 4 or 5 years. I worked for Harper R. Smith know that he Smith lost a horse about Jan. 12th, 1882 saw tracks going north from the stable, followed the tracks towards Henry Adams and found that Frank Wood had eaten supper at Adams that night and had left about 9 o'clock, the day after F. W. was arrested he told me in the Bremer Co. Jail at Waverly that he took the horses asked me to do what I could for him to get him off easy, he said he watched me the night he took the horse until I went to bed. I talked with him today he told me he took the horse.

John Carstensen sworn testified as follows, age 23 years, Residence Waverly, am Deputy Sheriff of Bremer Co., Ia. Know Frank Wood, first saw him about Jan. 14th, 1882 in custody of Sheriff of Floyd Co. in Chas. City I served a warrant on him and took him into my custody, he said it was all right commenced crying and said he had stolen the horses and had sold them to Waller Bros. Charles City. On my way to Chas. City saw Louis Harper who told me he saw a man with two gray horses he was riding one and leading the other which had a harness on. The description he gave me both of the man and the horses agreed with the description of the horses and Frank Wood when I found them at Chas. City. Met several other men on my way to Chas City who gave me descriptions of a man with two gray horses in his possession going in the direction of Chas. City each description agreed exactly with the horses and Frank Wood when I arrested him. When I brought the horses back Mr. Stotts claimed one and A. Henry Zierjacks claimed the other for Harper R. Smith. I never heard F. W. deny the stealing of the horses but have heard him on several occasions admit to the stealing and claimed it was poverty that drove him to.

Frank and Ellen met at the town pump while Frank was still incarcerated—not, as I have

them, after he gets out. Ellen, of course, knew that he was in prison. They married, changed their name to Strong, and then moved to Kansas City, as Sara and James do. Here is Frank and Ellen's wedding portrait, upon which I base the scene in the photography studio.



Frank and Ellen Strong

The Strongs had a grocery store, and we still have the advertisement that ran in a KC newspaper on July 16, 1889.

Cast Your Eye on This!

WE DON'T WANT THE WORLD!
BUT WE WANT ALL THE TRADE

Our Price List Calls for:

12 lbs Granul'd Sugar,	\$1.00.	2 lb. Can Pumpkins	.10
13 " Light Brown "	1.00.	Strawberries, 2 Cans.	.25.
2 Pkgs Arbuckle's Coffee,	.45.	Tea, per lb., from .90 to	.25.
2 " Dillwith's "	.45.	Fine Imperial Syrup	
3 lbs. Extra Moca "	1.00.	p'r Gal.	.50.
5 " " Rio "	1.00.	Cider Vinegar, " "	.20.
4 " " Gov. Java,	1.00	5 to 8 Bars Soap for	.25.
2 Cans Tomatoes,	.25	Best Tobacco. per pound.	.45.

27 Varieties of Candies.

Cig rettes. Cigars. Tobaccos. Lemons. Oranges, Pears.

Pineapples, Peaches, Bread and Cake.

BUTTER EGGS AND COUNTRY PRODUCE A SPECIALTY.

MEAT MARKET!

Is supplied with the BEST FRESH and
SALT MEATS.

COAL, WOOD, HAY, FEED &c.

At WHOLESALE and RETAIL.

Goods delivered anywhere in or outside of the Consolidated Cities.

FRANK STRONG,
S. 5TH ST., ARMSTRONG, KAS.

Reproduction of advertisement for the Frank Strong
Grocery in a July 16, 1889 newspaper

Their daughters, including my Grandma Bessie, were born in Missouri and Kansas. They eventually move west across Nebraska supplying ties for the railroad, and they are in the vicinity of the Wounded Knee Massacre. At one point, Frank chased Ellen with an ax, and at another point Ellen went out to confront an angry mob of Frank's employees while Frank hid under the bed. Ellen cooked for the crews, and the story goes that she cooked breakfast one day, gave birth to my Grandmother Bessie, and then went back and cooked the evening meal. At least that's the story. This part of their lives is the subject of the second book in the series, *Numberless Infinities*.

Finally, they settled in northern Wyoming and started a hotel and livery in what was initially called Strong but is now Lovell. The Mormon community moved in and looked askance at what went on there. I don't know if it was a brothel, but I don't think so. The liquor was probably enough to be looked down on. The Strongs went in partners with other townsfolk to start a brick and tile factory, which eventually burned down, and there was much finger pointing. At one point, the whole town was moved two blocks south in one night. These events are the basis for

the third part in the trilogy called *This Lowly Ground*. After the brick and tile kerfluffle, my family moved 25 miles north to the base of the Pryor Mountains. This is the ranch on which I and my six siblings grew up. Frank passed away in 1914, and Ellen, who was known to everyone as Ma Strong, lived until 1950.

I came across this entry in the book *Progressive Men of the State of Wyoming* (A.W. Bowen & Co., Chicago, Ill., 1903).

Strongly endowed by nature with clearness of vision, quickness of apprehension and alertness in action, so that the opportunity presented for advancement have neither escaped his knowledge or been neglected in use, Frank S. Strong has made steady progress in the race for supremacy among men and the acquisition of this world's good from time to time, when, at the age of twenty, he lifted the gage of battle in life's contest for himself, until now when, at but little over twice that age, he is comfortably provided with a competence, being well-established in his chosen line of business and secure in the respect and esteem of his fellow men. Mr. Strong's interesting and adventurous life began in the state of Illinois on February 8, 1861. His parents, John and Elizabeth (Robinson) Strong, were natives of New York and early settlers of Illinois. When he was ten years old they moved to Iowa, and there he completed his minority, lacking one year, and received a common school education. In 1881 he started out in life for himself, coming to Nebraska and locating in Red Willow county, where for a number of years he was actively engaged in farming. From there he went to Fort Scott, Kan., and was engaged in railroad work for a number of years, and then in Kansas City he opened a merchandising establishment. In 1889 he left the comforts and allurements of city life and went to the wild country of the Black Hills, casting in his lot with its rush of fortune seekers; but, instead of following the almost universal occupation of mining, he engaged in railroad work and found it profitable until 1892, when he came to Wyoming for the purpose of joining the great army of enterprising and hardy men who were engaged in the stock industry. For three years he prospected for a suitable location for his enterprise, working at various useful occupations, and in 1895 took up land on the border of which the town of Lovell has since grown up. He owns 720 acres adjoining the townsite, and in the town itself he owns and conducts a hotel, livery barn and saloon. He also owns 320 acres of land in Montana and has on it 150 fine cattle and fifty well-bred horses in addition to the stock he owns in this state. He was united in marriage with Miss Ellen J. Noble, a native of Wisconsin, but reared in Iowa, at the time of marriage a resident of Denver, Colo., where the ceremony was performed on October 19, 1885. They have two children, their winsome daughters, Lulie E. and Bessie F. Mr. Strong is not only a prosperous and enterprising man who pushes his own business with vigor and success, but he is a broad-minded, far-seeing and public spirited citizen, whose interest in the welfare of his country and state, and in the town in which he lives, is manifested by continual activity in behalf of all means of advancement and improvement for them and the benefit of his people. He is well-esteemed as a leading and useful citizen, whose services are of high value and whose example is an inspiration to others in the line of every good work.

I wish I could have met Ma Strong. She was a strong and amazing and kind woman, and she was always adopting strays and helping people. We named my daughter Elizabeth after her—Elizabeth's middle name is "Strong."

The lives of my great grandparents aren't the only things that I fictionalized. I did a tremendous amount of research for this book. After all, it's much easier to research than to write the damn thing.

The American Memory Site of the National Archives is an amazing resource for researchers, and much of their material is online, and so I didn't have to travel to Washington D.C. to access it. Fortunately, there are birds-eye views of downtown Kansas City from 1879 and 1895, perfectly framing my time period. I could have gone so far as to tell you which streets Sara and James walked down.

And I also have the tremendous good fortune—for me, not for the residents of KC West Bottoms—of having a vast photographic evidence to draw from. That's because the Bottoms flood regularly, and people take lots of photos during these natural disasters.

There are many other things based on fact.

Work began on the "Additional Penitentiary" in Anamosa, Iowa, in 1873. In 1884, the name was changed to the "State Penitentiary." In 1885, it held 281 inmates. Electric lights were actually at the prison when James would have been there—they were first used in December of 1882 Fictional purposes—sorry. The inmates wore the broad horizontal black and white stripes and built their own prison, first in wood and then in stone.

The cookbook *The Compleat Housewife* by Eliza Smith is fact. First published in 1727 in London, the cookbook was republished almost verbatim in 1742 by the Virginia printer William Parks. It was the first cookbook published in the Colonies. The description of the book and its title page is real.

"The Patch" was a 4.5-acre area in the West Bottoms north of James Street and west of Ohio Avenue. It lay west of the Armour Packing Factory. If anything, I built it up a bit. The *Kansas City Journal* reported in 1910: "On this little spot of land fifty-nine houses have been built, of every kind of building material from pieces of driftwood to scraps of asphalt paving. The little shacks are built up against each other, and many front doors in the settlement look out on some neighbor's cow lot." Citizens of the Patch were evicted in April of 1910 and the land was sold for \$200.

In 1900, *The 18th Annual Report of the U.S. Commissioner of Labor* reported the following prices in Chicago: a one pound loaf of bread \$0.05, a quart of milk \$0.06, a pound of flour \$0.02, and a one-pound rib roast \$0.13. Small, dark, two- to three-room apartments rented for \$4-10 a month, while better housing could cost \$100 per month. Men worked an average of 290 days a year and made \$553.52, while women worked an average of 295 days a year and made \$313.42. I extrapolated backwards to estimate wages and prices.

Inventions such as electricity were making their way across the continent. Electrical infrastructure began reaching Iowa, Missouri, and Kansas in 1882. Kansas City had mule-drawn cable cars in 1881, but by 1885, they were powered by electricity. If you remember, the Transcontinental Railroad was completed in just 1869.

In 1881, an African American man named Levi Harrington, 23, was lynched—hung and

shot—from the Bluff Bridge for killing a policeman named Jones, a crime Harrington did not commit. It got little coverage in the papers because it happened the same day that Jesse James was shot in Saint Joseph. The lynching that Moses and Auntie refer to previously is that of Joseph Lawrence, a black man from Girard, Crawford County, Kansas, for the charge of rape. It happened on July 6, 1885.

I moved the flood from 1881 to 1885. There was a great flood in 1844 that came through the West Bottoms with a deafening roar and filled it bluff to bluff. It was reported that, during the night of the flood, cries were heard but the flood was too overwhelming to attempt rescue. The next day, rescuers found Louis Tromley perched in a tree, his wife in a tree a hundred yards farther on, and his son sitting on the peak of the swaying house. Later that day, onlookers saw Tromley's house floating with the current, with Tromley's favorite dog perched on its top. Tromley yelled out the dog's name, and the dog let out a mournful wail. Tromley almost plunged into the water to save it. And then, in 1881, the spring was cold and wet, and sleighs were seen in the city as late as March 19. The 1881 flood peaked on April 29. There were more large floods in 1903 and 1951.

Little things. President Cleveland did have a mistress. Sara's paste opal jewel exists, and in 2003, it was for sale by The Three Graces, Houston, Texas, for \$1,380. The description of passengers getting cozy during a train wreck that is told by Moses is from Bill Nye's 1882 *Forty Lies and Other Liars*. I based the rats at the river on an account given by a man who grew up in Kansas City in the twentieth century—the 1960s, I think. The description of the packing factories owes a lot to Sinclair Lewis's *The Jungle*. On September 15, 1885, Jumbo the elephant was crushed by a train in Saint Thomas, Ontario, Canada. Thomas's Tsististas are the Cheyenne, and the words from the Cheyenne language is from the Dull Knife College web site, but their spelling is my own.

I thought a lot about the story's dialog. Who knows how people talked in 1885? The past is another country. Just like today, what was written was probably much different than what was said. But I also wanted it to sound to the reader like real people talking. To compromise, I wrote the dialog as I would any other, and then I tweaked it and took out the words that either weren't contemporary or don't "feel" historical and then put in words that do feel historical. For me, communication and clarity rank above "truth" (as if there is only one truth).

In a few places, I tip my hat to particular images or turns of phrase from writers I admire. I think of them as grace notes. When James first goes into the bowels of the packing factory, Joseph says hello to Jurgis—Jurgis is the main character in Sinclair Lewis's *The Jungle*. When the moon rises in KC "like a fired pine knot," it's a small homage to Jean Toomer and "Blood Burning Moon." There were many more, but they were taken out in revision. Imitation as the sincerest form of flattery.

When I wrote the first draft of *Earth's Imagined Corners*, I had not visited Kansas City. And so it was a surreal experience to drive through the West Bottoms for the first time after I had so fully imagined it. It was the same but not the same. Today, overpasses lace between buildings

that Sara and James would have seen out the cable car window. A wastewater treatment plant and a Fedex warehouse lie next to narrow empty streets crowded with abandoned nineteenth century buildings, their lower windows shattered and their elaborately painted signs still visible behind graffiti. Driving through them, even in broad daylight, feels a little like one of those horror movies where no one's around and you're just waiting for something nasty to pop out from an alley.

To this day, I can't help thinking of all those people who lived and worked in those giant husks, people who felt itchy in wool and got sunburned and loved that early morning splash of water on the face. People like Sara and James, like Frank and Ellen Strong. I look forward to continuing their journey in the next book.

– Tamara Linse, Laramie, Wyoming, 2015

Discussion Questions

1. The title of *Earth's Imagined Corners* comes from John Donne's "Holy Sonnet VII." Why might the author have chosen a line from this poem as her title? How does the poem relate to the novel's action, characters, or themes?
2. The novel is set in small-town Iowa and then the metropolis of Kansas City. How are these settings characterized? Do these settings support or detract from the action and themes of the novel?
3. Historical fiction is often set during well-known events in history such as the Civil War. However, *Earth's Imagined Corners* is not. Does it add or detract from the action of the story?
4. Historical fiction is said more to reflect the time in which it is written than the actual historical time period in which it is set. Which aspects of *Earth's Imagined Corners* are a reflection of 1885 and which reflect present-day sensibilities?
5. Writers of historical fiction are faced with both remaining true to the historical period yet making the actions of the characters relatable by updating certain things. For example, in *Earth's Imagined Corners*, the dialog has the flavor of the time but does not strictly represent how people talked in that time. What do you think about this? Where should the line be?
6. There are echoes of the legacy of large forces—such as the Civil War, racism, and waves of immigration—throughout the book. Where do you see these echoes? Is there a larger message about the historical, societal forces that shape us?
7. Certain events in *Earth's Imagined Corners* are based on real events. For example, the hanging of Moses is based on newspaper reports of a similar event at the time. Also, the rats coming out of the ground near the offal pipe is based on an incident in the 1960s in Kansas City. What are a fiction writer's responsibilities to history? What are her or his

responsibilities to the readers' experiences?

8. One of the themes of *Earth's Imagined Corners* is poverty. How does Sara's experience of money change over the course of the book? James's experience of money? Do you think it's an accurate representation?
9. Another theme is romantic love versus married love, as well as the difference between courting in the 1880s versus courting today. Social pressures were much more "Victorian" in the 1880s. How does the author try to convey the differences between then and now? Does she do it effectively? How does Sara and James's relationship change over the course of the narrative?
10. Women had few rights in the 1880s. They could not vote at this time, and they had just gained the right to own property and earn their own money in the U.S. Does the author effectively convey the danger in which Sara places herself with her decision to elope with James?
11. Both Sara and James have had challenges in their upbringings—Sara's father was very controlling, and James experienced severe poverty and unsettled circumstances. How do these upbringings manifest themselves in their adult lives and what does it bring to their marriage?
12. How is race represented in *Earth's Imagined Corners*? Does this representation tread new ground, or does it seem to rehash things you've read before? What are a writer's responsibilities when it comes to race? Should an author write about people of a different race?
13. One of the pitfalls of writing about race is to stereotype minorities as evil. Another is to stereotype minorities as good. How does *Earth's Imagined Corners* walk this delicate line?
14. This time period saw "a cult of death," with the deaths of prominent citizens reported in gruesome and salacious detail in the newspapers. There were many rituals around death. Today, we have largely swept death under the rug. Which is the healthier approach? Why the differences in approaches then versus now?
15. James has a hard time finding work. Do you think this accurately reflects the time period? What forces, both historical and personal, cause these challenges? What might James have done differently?
16. James is severely injured and in a coma for days. Discuss medical science at the time versus medical science today. What are the differences? How does this trauma effect James? Do you think James is to blame for his later actions, or is it due to the head trauma?
17. What is the dog Opal's function in the book? Introducing a vulnerable character such as Opal or a child into a story is dangerous. It can tug at your heartstrings, but then it can seem gratuitous if that character is killed off. Does the author effectively walk that line?
18. The flood is reminiscent of the flood in Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching*

God. If you have read this classic, how do the floods compare? In general, what narrative purpose do natural disasters such as floods serve? Does it seem natural to the story (i.e., did the author prepare you well enough?) or does it seem out of left field (i.e., *deus ex machina*)?

19. Did you like Sara? James? Does a female character need to be “likable”? Does a male character?
20. The novel could be considered a *bildungsroman*, or coming-of-age novel. What other bildungsromans have you read, and how does *Earth's Imagined Corners* compare? Why do we keep returning to this type of story?
21. Does Sara's story end in triumph, despair, or a mixture of both? Are you satisfied with the ending? Would you have liked more closure? Or do you like an ending to be looser and less tied into a nice bow?
22. Did you like the book? If so, why? If not, why not?

The Round Earth Series

Book 1 – *Earth's Imagined Corners*

In 1885 Iowa, Sara Moore is a dutiful daughter, but when her father tries to force her to marry his younger partner, she must choose between the partner—a man who treats her like property—and James Youngblood—a kind man she hardly knows who has a troubled past. When she confronts her father, he beats her and turns her out of the house, breaking all ties, so she decides to elope with James to Kansas City with hardly a penny to their names. In the tradition of Willa Cather's *O Pioneers!* and Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, *Earth's Imagined Corners* is a novel that comprehends the great kindnesses and violences we do to each other.

Book 2 – *Numberless Infinities*

Coming in January 2016

In 1890 Kansas City, Sara and James Youngblood have built a life for themselves, but then James's yearning for the West gets the better of him. He accepts a contract to supply ties for the burgeoning railroad, and off they go across Nebraska and the Dakotas. Life on the road is hard, and Sara cooks for the crew, but then she discovers she's pregnant—she lost a baby before and almost died. The crooked railroad boss refuses to pay, and James's crew revolts, and so they are stranded on Indian lands with the rising tide of the Ghost Dance religion. *Numberless Infinities* may remind you of Jane Kirkpatrick's *All Together in One Place* and Thomas Berger's *Little Big Man*.

Book 3 – *This Lowly Ground*

Coming in January 2017

In 1894, Sara and James Youngblood are exhausted by life on the wagon road, and so when their son Jake has his hand taken off in a gun accident, they decide to homestead in northern Wyoming. James teams with a local rancher to build an irrigation system, and soon a town grows up—one that all agree should be called Youngblood. Years pass. A straggling band of Mormons pushing handcarts from Salt Lake City show up in the middle of a snow storm, and the town pulls together to help them settle. Soon, though, conflicts erupt in the running of the town, and when the town's livelihood, a brick and tile factory, mysteriously burns down, Sara and James's son Jake is blamed. *This Lowly Ground* is in the tradition of Willa Cather and Carson McCullers.

About the Author



Tamara Linse grew up on a ranch in northern Wyoming with her farmer/rancher rock-hound ex-GI father, her artistic musician mother from small-town middle America, and her four sisters and two brothers. She jokes that she was raised in the 1880s because they did things old-style—she learned how to bake bread, break horses, irrigate, change tires, and be alone, skills she's been thankful for ever since. The ranch was a partnership between her father and her uncle, and in the 80s and 90s the two families had a Hatfields and McCoys-style feud.

She worked her way through the University of Wyoming as a bartender, waitress, and editor. At UW, she was officially in almost every college on campus until she settled on English and after 15 years earned her bachelor's and master's in English. While there, she taught writing, including a course called Literature and the Land, where students read Wordsworth and Donner Party diaries during the week and hiked in the mountains on weekends. She also worked as a technical editor for an environmental consulting firm.

She still lives in Laramie, Wyoming, with her husband Steve and their twin son and daughter. She writes fiction around her job as an editor for a foundation. She is also a photographer, and when she can she posts a photo a day for a Project 365. Please stop by Tamara's website, www.tamaralinse.com, and her blog, *Writer, Cogitator, Recovering Ranch Girl*, at tamara-linse.blogspot.com. You can find an extended bio there with lots of juicy details. Also friend her on Facebook and follow her on Twitter, and if you see her in person, please say hi.

Find Tamara Linse on the web:

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Your Turn

If you enjoyed *Earth's Imagined Corners*, it would be tremendously helpful if you would spread the word—stop by your favorite online book site and review it! It's the one thing you can do to really help an author. It doesn't have to be anything elaborate, just a sentence or two if that's all you're up for.

Here are some sites you might visit to leave a review:

- Amazon
- Barnes and Noble
- Goodreads
- Booklikes
- LibraryThing
- Shelfari

You can also visit www.tamaralinse.com/writing_earths_imagined_corners_review.html for direct links to these sites.

If you'd like to sign up for Tamara's newsletter, stop by her website (www.tamaralinse.com). There you'll also find some freebie content as an incentive.

And, if you liked *Earth's Imagined Corners*, there will be two more coming in the series—*Numberless Infinities* and *This Lowly Ground*. You might also enjoy other previously published works by Tamara Linse—a short story collection called *How to Be a Man* and a novel called *Deep Down Things*. They are available online at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, iBooks, IndieBound, and possibly a bookstore or library near you—you can always order them through your favorite bookstore.

How to Be a Man

a short story collection



“Never acknowledge the fact that you're a girl, and take pride when your guy friends say, ‘You're one of the guys.’ Tell yourself, ‘I am one of the guys,’ even though, in the back of your mind, a little voice says, ‘But you've got girl parts.’” – Birdie, in “How to Be a Man”

A girl whose self-worth revolves around masculinity, a bartender who loses her sense of safety, a woman who compares men to plants, and a boy who

shoots his cranked-out father. These are a few of the hard-scrabble characters in Tamara Linse's debut short story collection, *How to Be a Man*. Set in contemporary Wyoming—the myth of the West taking its toll—these stories reveal the lives of tough-minded girls and boys, self-reliant women and men, struggling to break out of their lonely lives and the emotional havoc of their families to make a connection, to build a life despite the odds. *How to Be a Man* falls within the traditions of Maile Meloy, Tom McGuane, and Annie Proulx.

Also available in audiobook read by P. J. Morgan.

Deep Down Things

a novel



Deep Down Things, Tamara Linse's debut novel, is the emotionally riveting story of three siblings torn apart by a charismatic bullrider-turned-writer and the love that triumphs despite tragedy.

From the death of her parents at sixteen, Maggie Jordan yearns for lost family, while sister CJ drowns in alcohol and brother Tibs withdraws. When Maggie and an idealistic young writer named Jackdaw fall in love, she is certain that she's found what she's looking for. As she helps him write a novel, she gets pregnant, and they marry. But after Maggie gives birth to a darling boy, Jes, she struggles to cope with Jes's severe birth defect, while Jackdaw struggles to overcome writer's block brought on by memories of his abusive father.

Ambitious, but never seeming so, *Deep Down Things* may remind you of Kent Haruf's *Plainsong* and Jodi Picoult's *My Sister's Keeper*.

Soon available in audiobook read by P. J. Morgan.