

North Country Press
Unity, Maine
Publicity / Press Release
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Freedom Farm | Jennifer Neves

2021 from North Country Press

UNITY, MAINE—*Freedom Farm* by Jennifer Neves will be released in mid-February 2021 by North Country Press.

Inspiration for this essay collection came as Neves began a family of her own. Raising her four children within spitting distance of her childhood home in Freedom, Maine caused a flood of memories, reflections, and questions about the very nature of family lore. What stories do we tell others when we describe ourselves? What stories bring us pride, embarrassment, a feeling of connection? In her essays, Neves examines her own stories and how they have shaped her values and continue to influence her journey through this world.

When asked whether readers unfamiliar with farming life would enjoy this collection, Neves says, “I do. I think the broader themes in this collection are accessible to everyone. It really digs in to how the stories that we choose to tell both shape and define us.”

Freedom Farm has been endorsed by a variety of authors, across genres. Essayist Brenda Miller, author of *An Earlier Life*, says of Neves, “[she] is our modern-day E.B. White!”

Rick Barot, celebrated poet, and author of *The Galleons*, writes, “With equal doses of lyricism, clarity, and humor, Neves has written an achingly good book about the fullness of being in the world—a fullness of body and mind, of lament and love.”

Notable lyrical essayist and author of *On Looking*, *Rough Likeness*, and *All The Fierce Tethers*, describes the essays in *Freedom Farm* as, “far more than retellings of family lore, or a repository for family history - they are each, unto themselves, explorations of pressing questions, and investigations into authenticity, and a way of honoring the beliefs and objects we inherit from our elders and family members that outlast time and place.”

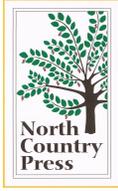
More information about upcoming interviews, events, and readings can be found on Jenniferneves.com.

About the Author:

Jennifer Neves lives and writes in Palermo, Maine. She returned to Maine after spending time living abroad in West Africa serving in the Peace Corps, then in Washington where she attended the Rainier Writing Workshop for her MFA in creative writing.

Jennifer and her husband live in an old farmhouse on 42 acres and spend their days trying to keep up with their four young children.

Inspiration for her work comes from family life, watching a family grow and change while coming to terms with her own path—one that does not include farming.



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Review of Freedom Farm

“It’s astonishing how much is packed into this entertaining account of the idiosyncratic Family Neves over three generations of Maine farm life. *Freedom Farm* is a compelling meditation on family, identity, place, farming, nature, memory, time itself. Most of all, it’s a celebration of what stories are, how they arise, how they create human meaning to help us face a future that is unknowable. (At one point, the author invents a new genre: Speculative Nonfiction.) A shrewd and gutsy truth-teller, Neves is a superb narrator with the ability to flex her voice easily over a wide register. A wry self-knowledge bonds us to her, a smart and capable woman prone to throw herself impulsively into any task with gusto and confidence, often lacking the preparation she knows is necessary (“I enjoy the uncalculated risk”). Neves’ sharply observant eye catches the precarious balance and human comedy of the present, while sifting the past and imagining the future. Always there’s an appreciation of multiple points of view, of other lives which she feels responsible to, be they plants, animals, unruly pets, or the four children who emerge with distinct personalities in the second half of the book when the author and her husband restore an old Maine farm, recreating the spirit of the original where she grew up. The polished individual chapters are self-contained units, whether describing a real world process like harvesting beans, or unintended farce, or moving scenes that can catch your breath. Each has a truth of its own. The transformative magic of Neves’ mind and heart weaves these separate pieces into an interconnected, multifaceted whole, the way successful families—and the best stories--do. *Freedom Farm* has the surety and wisdom of an instant classic.”

Stan Sanvel Rubin, author of *There. Here. and Hidden Sequel*

Praise for Freedom Farm

*“Neves is a born storyteller with a personal essayist’s pitch-perfect voice, a generous and self-deprecating humor, and a rare gift for digressions that lead us, her lucky readers, into the deepest landscapes of the human heart.”—**Rebecca McClanahan**, author of *In the Key of New York City: A Memoir in Essays* and *The Tribal Knot: A Memoir of Family, Community, and a Century of Change**

*“...With equal doses of lyricism, clarity, and humor, Neves has written an achingly good book about the fullness of being in the world—a fullness of body and mind, of lament and love.”—**Rick Barot**, author of *The Galleons, Chord, and Darker Fall**

*“Funny, affecting, and wise, *Freedom Farm* is a romp and also a Valentine—to place, weather, family, and the power of memory and imagination—accomplished not only with love, but with vigor and verve. A book for all seasons and all creatures great and small.”—**Dinah Lenney**, author of *Coffee and The Object Parade**

*“In Neves’s hands, and through her words, these essays are far more than retellings of family lore, or a repository for family history—they are each, unto themselves, explorations of pressing questions, and investigations into authenticity, and a way of honoring the beliefs and objects we inherit from our elders and family members that outlast time and place.”—**Lia Purpura**, award-winning author of *Rough Likeness*, and *All the Fierce Tethers**

*“Jennifer Neves is our modern-day E.B. White! In delightful essays that make us both laugh and cry, Neves ruminates on a wide range of topics from beans to goats to children, always with an eye toward how our stories make us who we are. *Freedom Farm* is one of the most satisfying collections I’ve read in a very long time.”—**Brenda Miller**, author of *An Earlier Life**

*“Neves writes with humor, honesty, and an innate storytelling ability. As we move with her through farm seasons and years, we see not only the “cyclical nature of raising crops” but the cycle of a human life, too. This memoir takes us into a world so few have ventured and is a true pleasure to read.”—**Jessica Barksdale**, author of *The Burning Hour* and the forthcoming *The Play’s the Thing**

Freedom Farm

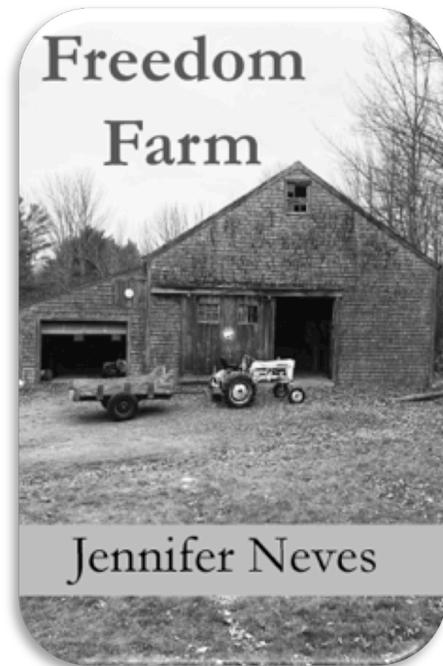
By Jennifer Neves

North Country Press: 2021
NONFICTION • PAPERBACK •
5 ½" X 8 ¼" • 145 PP.
\$15.95 U.S. / \$ 15.95 CAN

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AND VIA NOOK PUBLISHING

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Jennifer Neves holds an MFA in creative writing from the Rainier Writing Workshop at Pacific Lutheran University and a Bachelor's of Science from the University of Maine. She is the author of *Backpack Like You Mean It*.

Freedom Farm is a collection of essays exploring family lore, the power of our own stories, and a meditation on farming, raising a family, and what it means to be a Mainer.

More information about Jennifer Neves can be found at Jenniferneves.com.

Freedom Farm by Jennifer Neves
North Country Press 2021: \$15.95
ISBN: 978-1-943424-62-7 LCCN 2020947477

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Book Synopsis

Freedom Farm is an entanglement of memories, both distant and recent, in which Neves explores her own values, instincts, and motives. Through the lens of Neves' own experience, Part One of this collection examines the stories her parents told and retold about homesteading, animal husbandry, and navigating neighborly relationships in rural Maine.

Part Two of *Freedom Farm* follows Neves to her own ancient farmhouse in rural Maine, where she, her husband, and four children continue to create stories in their own chaotic way. These essays are a testament to the power of memory itself, how it allows us to extract both joy and purpose from our past and present. The collection as a whole is equal parts mediation and celebration on what it means to be the daughter of a farmer, a mother, and a Mainer.

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