

Fiction Reviews, March 15, 2011

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★ Henry, Joe. [Lime Creek](#). Random. Jun. 2011. c.160p. ISBN 9781400069415. \$20. F

This first novel from noted lyricist Henry opens with a young man named Spencer gentling a two-year-old bay colt, watched closely by the woman he'll eventually marry. It ends powerfully with Spencer's son showing his stuff when he's caught in a blizzard and must recapture a horse that has fled the barn, spooked by sliding snow. In between, told in heart-wrenchingly beautiful prose, we find the story of a Wyoming ranch family sometime in the 20th century. We see Spencer, out east at Harvard, diffidently wooing and eventually bringing home the sweetheart whose family summered in Wyoming. We see Spencer's twin boys getting into serious mischief with a bunch of tomatoes. We see a lovingly described Christmas celebration in a barn and the struggle to save cattle as the terrible snows come, with Spencer uncharacteristically caustic as he tells his queasy children about a much darker, colder, and scarier time he spent in the army. And in the end, unfolding in discrete and carefully observed chapters, we have the whole picture of these touching, hard-earned lives. **VERDICT** Brief but brilliant in the spirit of Paul Harding's *Tinkers*, this remarkable work is highly recommended.—**Barbara Hoffert**, *Library Journal*