



P R E F A C E :

The Cal Poly Shared Reading Program 2003

K E N T H A R U F B I O G R A P H Y

Kent Haruf (surname rhymes with “sheriff”) was born in Pueblo, Colorado in 1943. The son of a Methodist minister, Haruf was born and raised in the flatlands of northeastern Colorado, an environment that provides the background for his fiction. Haruf’s career path to his long-time ambition of writing was a slow and convoluted one. He received a B.A. degree from Nebraska Wesleyan University and an M.F. A. from the prestigious University of Iowa Writers’ Workshop at the age of thirty. He served in the U.S. Peace Corps in Turkey and has taught high school English in Wisconsin and Colorado and fiction writing at Nebraska Wesleyan and Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.



Haruf’s first work of fiction appeared in print, a short story in a literary magazine, eleven years after the Iowa Writers’ Workshop at the age of forty-one. His most recent novel, Plainsong, is set on the high plains of Colorado and has been widely celebrated. It was a finalist for the National Book Award, winner of the New Yorker Book Award, the Los Angeles Times Book Award, and the Book Sense Award. It won the Mountains and Plains Booksellers Association Award, the Salon.com Book Award, the Midlands Authors Award, the Alex Award from the American Library Association, and the Evil Companions Award from the Colorado Quarterly. It was selected as a Notable Book of the Year by both The New York Times and The Los Angeles Times, was a national bestseller, and has been translated into eight languages.

Haruf is the author of two earlier novels, The Tie That Binds, which received the Whiting Foundation Writers’ Award and Where You Once Belonged, which received the Maria Thomas Award for Fiction. He is the recipient of an Illinois Arts Council Grant, and his short fiction has appeared in The Best American Short Stories.

He is the father of three daughters, and has three stepdaughters and two stepsons. He and his wife Cathy live in Colorado.

(Source: Haruf press packet and Gale Literary Databases, Contemporary Authors.)

*Seven towns people
whose lives converge in:*
PLAINSONG