

# About The Author

by John Olson

Gnarly Berger was born in a guitar case in Istanbul. His mother was an Iranian singer from Israel accompanied by a Turkish *santur* player & a French guitarist (Gnarly's biological father) and into whose guitar case Gnarly entered this world, somewhat by accident, & found womblike comfort while his parents sang for money in the streets of Istanbul. The family eventually came to settle in Billings, Montana, which they found even more exotic & strange than the streets of Istanbul. They only stayed a week, but Gnarly would fondly remember the sunsets on the plains, & the cowboys clapping leather dice cups hard on the bar. After his parents returned to Europe, he spent a wild adolescence addicted to German pretzels & *Mad Magazine*, to which he would cite as seminal influences. The pretzels taught what syntax could do when it was twisted into knots & seasoned with a little salt, & *Mad Magazine* shined a Klieg light on the human comedy. Gnarly began writing when he felt words oozing from his fingers & attaching themselves to a sheet of paper. He was fascinated by the way they floated in the air like little embryos of potential meaning & disposition, their little letters squirming in anticipation of a life in books, which is the place words all want to be. Words like being filled with ink & enshrined in a quiet place where the only noise is the faint rustle of a page turning. Gnarly understood this about words & began treating them accordingly, as a shepherd among a flock of sheep, herding them into places where they could be appropriately viewed, & guided about in the mind, fluffy, playful creatures, craving perusal & a little grammar to orchestrate their inner chaos, just enough to make things juicy & nectarine. Gnarly's first book was a non-fiction monograph on the causes of inflammation, & how to maintain an erection in the bitter cold air of the Himalaya. Shortly after a motorcycle accident in Portugal, which left him permanently exhilarated, he began his well-known *Nevertheless* series, a romance chronicle set in Dubuque, Iowa, a city never visited by Mr.

Berger — nevertheless - as Gnarly would say, a place for which he has long felt a deep connection. *Nevermore* — the first volume of the *Nevertheless* series — won the Shortchange Prize for Furtive New Writers. *Confessions of an Intern*, a forthcoming novel, concerns the trials and tribulations of a middle-aged man negotiating the office politics of a literary arts organization.

