

Colleen Weagle works in a call centre and lives in a bungalow with her mother in a quiet Toronto suburb. In her spare time she writes spec scripts for a CBC riding-school drama (her mother's favourite) and plays an online game set in a resort populated by reindeer. It's a typical life. Except three months ago Colleen's husband Leonard—who led a similarly monotonous life—was found in a bog in the middle of the night, a two hours' drive from home. Dead.

With a flatly optimistic belief in the power of routine, Colleen has been soldiering on, trying not to think too hard about all the unknowns surrounding the death. But when a local news photo twigs Colleen's memory of a mystery attendee at Leonard's funeral she snaps into action.

In the maddening company of her ornery co-worker Patti, she heads to Niagara Falls on a quest to find the truth behind the death. Amid the slot machines and grubby hotels, the pair stumble into the darker underworld of a faded tourist trap. What they find will lead straight to an episode from Colleen's adolescence she thought she'd put firmly behind her.

Bleakly madcap, with deadpan dialogue, Shelstad's debut novel is a noir anti-thriller reminiscent of *Twin Peaks* and the work of Ottessa Moshfegh and early Kate Atkinson. He captures call-centre life, ramshackle tourist attractions, and suburbia with wit and sharp realism, and reveals the undercurrents of melancholy and the truly bizarre that can run beneath even the most seemingly mild-mannered lives.

In *Citizens of Light*, Sam Shelstad has created a darkly comic and compelling story about a truly unique call centre warrior on a mission to solve the mystery of her husband's death. Trust me, you'll laugh, think, and keep turning the pages.

Terry Fallis, two-time winner of the Stephen Leacock Medal for Humour

"Sam Shelstad has a funny, lively, engaging, peculiar mind—charming and surprising."

Sheila Heti, author *Pure Colour*

Clever and oddly sweet, the comedy in *Citizens of Light* has teeth, and Shelstad manages the trick of keeping all the strangeness grounded and human.

Naben Ruthnum, author of *A Hero of Our Time*

Once I started reading *Citizens of Light*, I couldn't put it down—in true Shelstad form, it's funny and charming, but also achingly human. A refreshingly unique literary voice.

Amy Jones, author of *We're All In This Together*