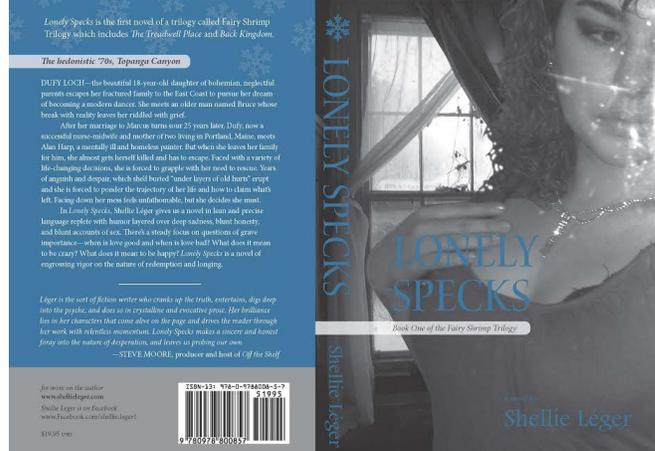


## Synopsis of *Lonely Specks*, a novel by Shellie Léger



When DUFY, a forty-four year old successful certified nurse midwife who lives in Portland, ME leaves her family for ALAN HARP, a mentally ill homeless painter, she almost gets herself killed. She's married to MARCUS, an "emotionally retarded" architect from whom she has grown estranged. Together, they parent two teen aged children, LUCIEN and TEVAH, with whom Dufy has a conflictual relationship. Having been raised by bohemian parents in Topanga Canyon in the seventies, Dufy headed off to the east coast to pursue a career in modern dance. Now, middle-aged, feeling victim to her own blunted passion, and "raging 40 –something hormones" as her child-hood friend CASSIE constantly reminds her, Dufy has hit a wall.

When she meets Harp, she quickly rushes in to save him, thereby hoping to redeem herself from a past fraught with loss and remorse. Ultimately, she glimpses the parallels between her intense attachment to Harp and an attachment she had in high school to STEFAN--a friend of her father's who became first her surrogate parent, and then lover, and BRUCE, a college boyfriend who suffered from schizophrenia and killed himself as a result of his delusions. She recognizes the myriad ways in which she has repeated dangerous behavior that compromises her integrity and safety but is powerless to liberate herself from "the electrifying" feeling of being with Harp who she "thinks about forty minutes out of every hour of every day" and gradually becomes ensnared in his chaotic life.

Finally believing she has reached a crossroad that demands action, she decides to throw her lot in with Harp's. She arrives at the cabin he is renting in Rangeley to offer to leave her family for him but finds him manic. He physically threatens her and she has no choice but to escape to town to facilitate his commitment to the local psychiatric hospital.

Faced with a variety of life-changing decisions, she is forced to grapple with her need to rescue. She returns home to face down the mess she's created.