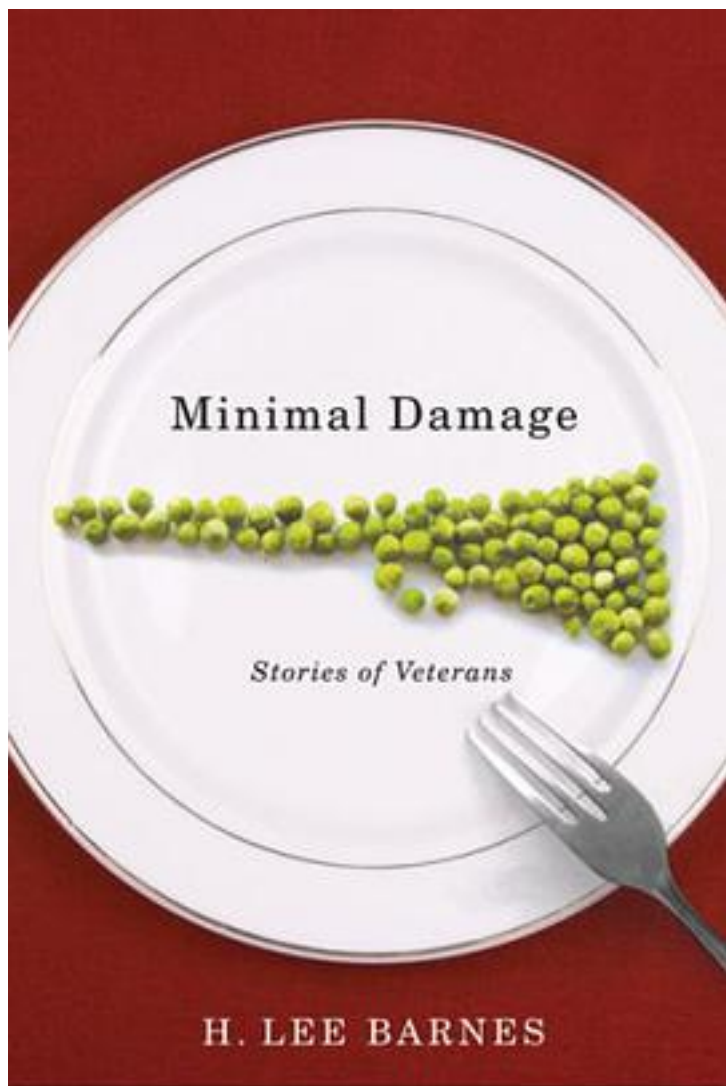


# Minimal Damage



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In the seven stories and novella of *Minimal Damage*, veterans search for dignity in a civilian life that has no need for men who were soldiers. Finding themselves psychically scarred, in crisis, on the fringes of society, or in battle with their memories, these men are living "like warts on America's ass." The characters range from the enigmatic Mr. K, who runs a reality television show and once led an escape from a Korean POW camp, to the doomed Billy Debecki, who regains his dignity in the last minutes of his life by remembering that he once willingly risked his life to save an enemy soldier. In one story, a man who was never a soldier finds a path toward reconciliation with his brother, a former Marine. In another, a man recalls becoming a soldier by watching the humanity of a fellow recruit disintegrate in basic training. In the novella "Snake Boy," a homeless Vietnam vet is kidnapped by a snake-handling evangelist. In proper, upstanding lives and lost, drifting ones, the depth of damage is never immediately apparent for these men. In war, chance, luck, and arbitrary timing conspire to determine a soldier's fate. As civilians, the same uncontrollable forces influence who finds a place in society and who is doomed to keep searching. With emotion, humor, and clarity, Barnes creates characters who show us what it is to live with the trauma of having experienced combat. The fractured souls and lives of these men remind us that the damage doesn't remain on the battlefield.

作者介绍:

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