

high school, when Lee's best friend's girl – and Lee's obsession – Honey, decides to seduce him. The ramifications of his actions don't seem to concern him very much.

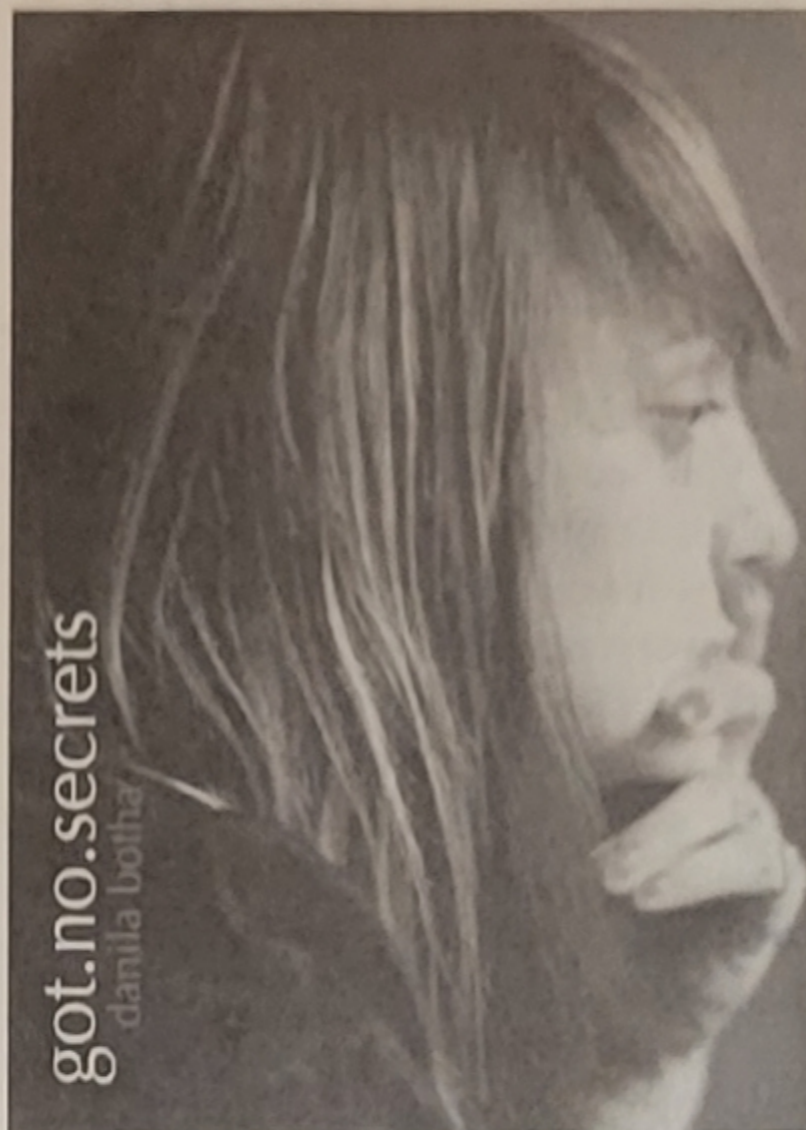
From his career as a minor drug dealer, he has squirreled away over \$100,000 and his desire to hustle to bring in more clients has fallen by the wayside too. What makes his character stand out is his apathy about clearing his name, perhaps a telling sign of the age we live in: Harris captures Lee's neurosis and insecurities about his appearance and luck with women. Harris's writing style is at times choppy and jarring, but this fits into the mood of a novel, a lost boy, never fully aware of the damage he is doing until it's too late. Overall a fun read with a serious dark side. (Timothy Green)

Got No Secrets

Danila Botha, 166 pgs., Tightrope Books, tightropebooks.com, \$20

Sitting at a cafe in my neighbourhood and working on this review, a friend of mine came in. She saw the book sitting on the table in front of me and said, "Hey,

I read this! I loved this book!" That's a pretty impressive recommendation, I think, if random people are wandering in off the street to praise it.



Got No Secrets is a collection of a dozen intimate, first-person portraits – or maybe more like snapshots – mostly of young women whose lives are teetering on the precipice of the disintegration-point. From "Paradox," Botha writes:

"Tina's hungover too and throws up huge chunks of I-don't-know-what on my favourite pair of Converse. It's a smell I'll never get rid of, no matter how many times I wash them, I ask her between heaves if she remembers any details. She shakes her head and is focused on her business."

These short stories (largely inspired by the author's experiences dealing with at-risk youth as an outreach worker) thrust the reader into the characters' minds with equal parts sympathy and self-awareness. The similarities shared between each protagonist are as revealing as the differences: from the suburban teen who ends up camwhoring for drugs, to the South African girl whose kidneys are slowly but inevitably shutting down, the visceral prose most effectively portrays just how slippery that slope can really be, how easy it is for a person to go from privilege to poverty, from life to death, sometimes so gradually that you never see it coming. The characterization is deep, often affectionate, always allowing you to judge for yourself. The writing is stark, honest and stripped-down, making no excuses, just like the classic punks that see frequent mention throughout. The

question that *Got No Secrets* asks is: exactly where does bad parenting end and self-determination begin? (Richard Rosenbaum)