



# Catina's Haircut: A Novel in Stories

*Paola Corso*

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*Catina's Haircut: A Novel in Stories* spans four generations of a peasant family in the brutal poverty of post-Unification southern Italy and in an immigrant's United States. The women in these tales dare to cross boundaries by discovering magical leaps inherent in the landscape, in themselves, and in the stories they tell and retell of family tragedy at a time of political unrest. Through an oral tradition embedded in the stone of memory and the flow of its reinvention, their passionate tale of resistance and transformation courses forward into new generations in a new world.

A woman threatens to join the land reform struggle in her Calabrian hill town, against her husband's will, during a call for revolution in 1919. A brother and sister turn to the village sorceress in Fascist Italy to bring rain to their father's drought-stricken farm. In Pittsburgh, new immigrants witness a miraculous rescue during the Great Flood of 1936. A young girl courageously dives into the Allegheny River to save her grandfather's only memento of the old country. With only broken English to guide her, a widow hops a bus in search of live chickens to cook for Easter dinner in her husband's memory. An aging woman in the title story is on a quest to cut the ankle-length hair as hard as the rocky soil of Calabria in a drought. A lonely woman who survived World War II bombings in her close-knit village, struggles to find community as a recent immigrant. A daughter visits her mother's hill town to try and fulfill a wish for her to see the Fata Morgana. These haunting images permeate Corso's linked stories of loss, hope, struggle, and freedom.

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