

WITH MADISON COUNTY PHOTOGRAPHY  
BY ROB AMBERG

# “THE SEEN AND THE UNSEEN”:

AN INTERVIEW  
with WILEY CASH

by **GEORGE HOVIS**

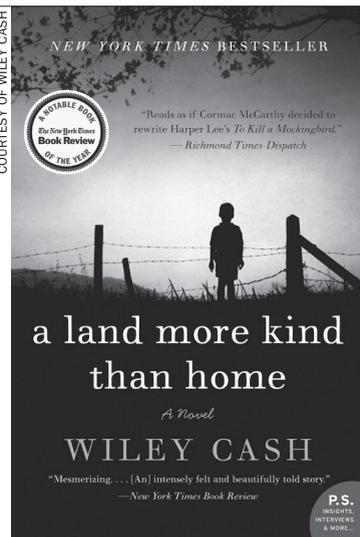


PHOTOGRAPH BY TIFFANY B. DAVIS; COURTESY OF WILEY CASH

ABOVE **Wiley Cash**

ABOVE RIGHT **The paperback edition of *A Land More Kind Than Home*, released in Jan. 2013 by William Morrow Paperbacks**

COURTESY OF WILEY CASH



RATHER THAN WRESTLING WITH EMERGING DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIAL, OR ECONOMIC TRENDS, MUCH (PERHAPS EVEN MOST) CONTEMPORARY NORTH CAROLINA LITERATURE CHRONICLES A PAST THAT CLARIFIES ITSELF WITH THE BENEFIT OF OUR CURRENT HISTORICAL VANTAGE. THIS TENDENCY IS

PERHAPS NOWHERE MORE EVIDENT THAN IN APPALACHIAN LITERATURE. If the trend in a rapidly urbanized Sunbelt state is still to write about rural spaces, the most remote settings continue to appear in Appalachian stories. Wiley Cash's debut novel, *A Land More Kind Than Home* (William Morrow/HarperCollins, 2012), is set during the 1980s among the remote ranges of Madison County, where past traditions die hard. The novel wrestles with those venerable themes of Southern literature: the claims of family and of religion upon the individual. The story depicts the tragic losses of a boy named Jess Hall, when his mother, Julie, is seduced by the snake-handling preacher Carson Chambliss. If Chambliss arises out of a long tradition of Southern gothic literature, he takes his particular

**GEORGE HOVIS** is an Associate Professor of English at SUNY College at Oneonta. A native of North Carolina, he earned a PhD from UNC-Chapel Hill and is currently Vice President of the Thomas Wolfe Society. He has published short fiction and literary criticism on Southern writers in various venues and is the author of *Vale of Humility: Plain Folk in Contemporary North Carolina Fiction* (University of South Carolina Press, 2007). See his article on Fred Chappell in *NCLR* 2011 and his essay "Ten North Carolina Stories That Ought to be Films" in *NCLR* 2012.