FATE MORELAND’S WIDOW
A Novel
John Lane
Foreword by Wiley Cash

On a placid Blue Ridge mountain lake on Labor Day Weekend in 1935, three locals sightseeing in an overloaded boat drown, and the cotton mill scion who owns the lake is indicted for their murders. Decades later Ben Crocker—witness to and reluctant participant in the aftermath of this long-forgotten tragedy—is drawn once more into the morally ambiguous world of mill fortunes and foothills justice.

The son of mill workers in Carlton, South Carolina, Crocker is caught between competing loyalties to his family and future. Crocker wanted more than a rough-hewn life on a factory floor, so he studied accounting at the local textile institute and was hired as bookkeeper to the owner, George McCane, a man as burdened by his familial ties as Crocker and even less prepared for the authority of his mantle. McCane’s decision to renovate the Carlton Mill and lay off families connected to the Uprising of ‘34, one of the largest labor strikes in U.S. history, puts Crocker in the ill-fitting position as his boss’s enforcer. Days after the evictions, the surprise indictment lands McCane in a North Carolina mountain jail and sinks Crocker even deeper into the escalating tensions between mill workers and the owners.

Fate Moreland’s Widow, the haunting first novel from award-winning poet, environmentalist, and storyteller John Lane, delves into historically inspired events of life, livelihood, death, and destiny against a rural Southern backdrop on the cusp of modernity. As Lane’s nuanced characters contend with overarching questions of loyalty and responsibility, he leaves little doubt these vexing dilemmas of the past resonate still today. New York Times best-selling author and Gastonia, North Carolina, native Wiley Cash provides the novel’s foreword.

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