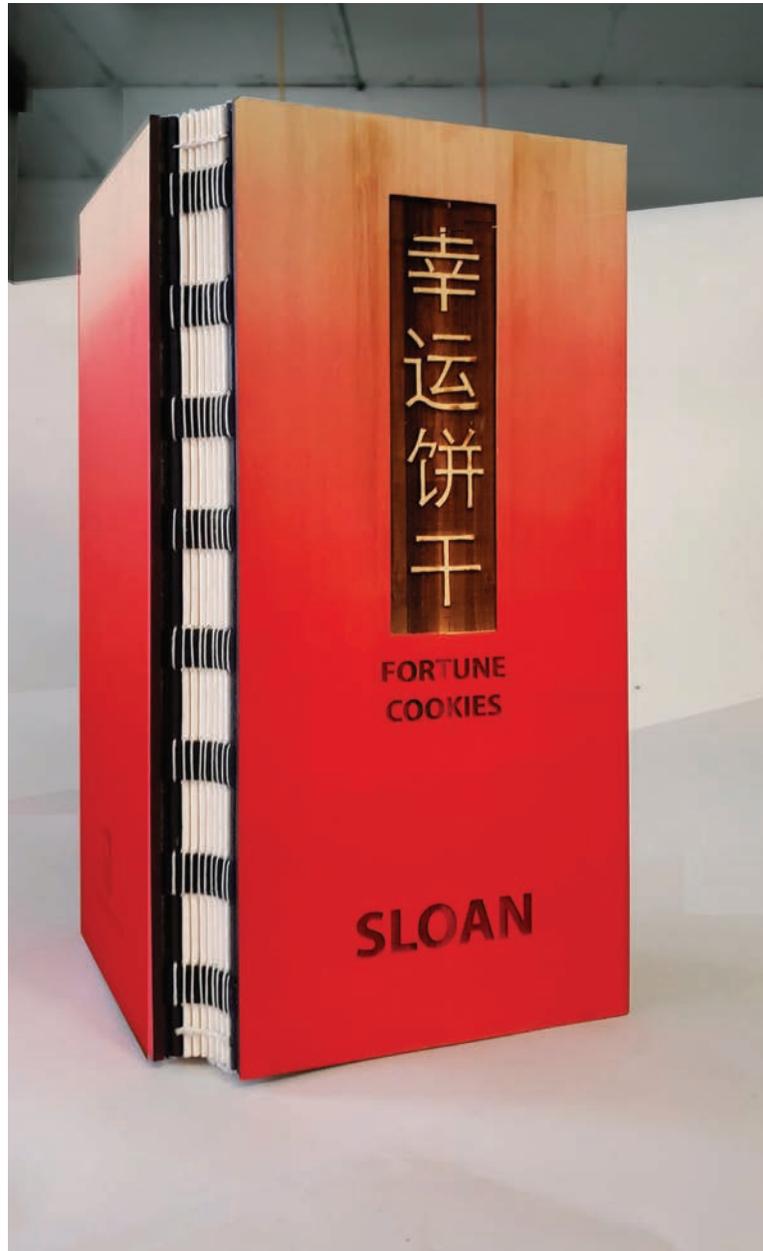


# FORTUNE COOKIES



Girls and grown women find themselves in labyrinths with walls that are invisible until they are smashed against. Can a fortune cookie provide a way forward?

**W**e like stories. Our brains are wired for stories, that's what neuroscience tells us. They enlarge our experience of the world and they enlarge who we are within ourselves. They point out what the future may hold, and they allow us to re-see our past. All the while, stories give us pleasure. They offer us diversion, understanding, and delight.

Stories, whether "true," based partly on facts, or entirely fictional, come to us in many ways. They are told to us by friends and others. When we're public, we overhear stories, in elevators, at work, sitting in a coffee shop, waiting for the train, passing strangers in the street. We hear stories when we listen to songs, podcasts, and audio books. We watch them on screens big and small. We read them in various formats, including books. What interests me most are books of fiction, novels and short stories. Novels and short stories share the same elements, characters, setting, plot, but they vary in length. Novels are the longest, short stories are the shortest. The shortest of short stories is called "flash" or "short short." Flash usually means less than a thousand words or less than five hundred or less than ten. Stephen King says that, ". . . a short story is like a kiss in the dark from a stranger." Flash is the briefest of kisses, and when the lights are turned on, no one's there.

The seven stories in *Fortune Cookies* hinge on moments when a female actor, sometimes the protagonist, sometimes the victim, faces a reckoning. In these flash fiction pieces, little girls and grown women find themselves in labyrinths with walls that are invisible until they are smashed against. Can a fortune cookie provide a way forward?

– Lynn Sloan, author



### ***Fortune Cookies* Production Notes**

This 72-page collection of seven flash fiction stories was written by Evanston, IL writer, Lynn Sloan. Each story highlights how a woman's chance taken today, can be tomorrow's unexpected fate.

Many of the text pages have over 1,900 pieces of hand-set type. The 12" x 5.5," 2-color, 25-copy edition required over 2,200 hand-printed pages to complete. The edition has 350 hand-tinted spot illustrations and 175 embossed images. The book features letterpress printing, handset Plantin and Univers, handmade end sheets, 2nd color drop caps for each story, seven onset fortunes per book, and exposed sewing over tapes with open spine binding. It will have a standard and deluxe edition. The 15 standard edition books are covered with book cloth on book board. The deluxe version is defined by its laser engraved bamboo front and back covers.

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**B**ESIDE MY BED I keep a picture of Daddy and me from before he went to war. The frame says "Daddy's Girl" and I'm sitting on his shoulders. Everybody else I covered up with stickers, so it's just Daddy and me. I was a baby then.

When Daddy came back, he quit the Army, and we moved off base into this new neighborhood. He got a job fixing x-ray machines. He travels a lot. When he comes home, he brings a case of beer, wine coolers for Momma, and something for me. Bags of nuts, once a long-stem sweetheart rose in a plastic wrapper that said, "Friar's Brew Thru," a shot glass from the state of Louisiana, like he doesn't even know how old I am. I'm five. Last month he gave me a turtle that looks like a chicken nugget. Daddy said I couldn't paint his shell with nail polish or glue 'n glitter because that would kill him. The most important thing is to not kill anything you don't mean to kill.

This afternoon Daddy brought me sunglasses that don't fit.

"Get your swimsuit on," Momma says. "I'll set up the sprinkler."

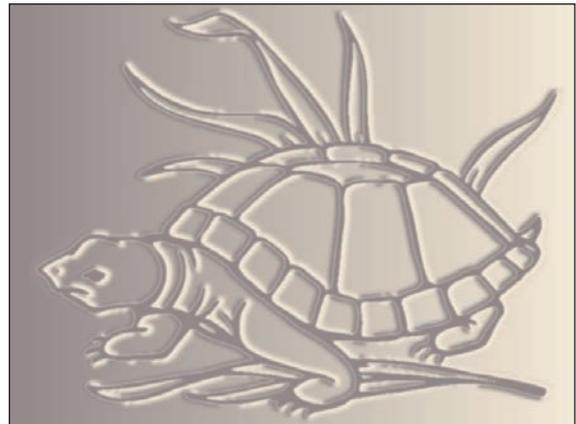
They don't want me around when Daddy first comes home. In my swimsuit, trying to keep my new sunglasses on my nose, I ask Daddy if he'll hand me down the pie pan with the star dented into the metal for a swimming pool for Turtle.

Nobody is outside. It's too hot. The neighbors put out flags for Memorial Day. No fucking flags for us, Daddy says.

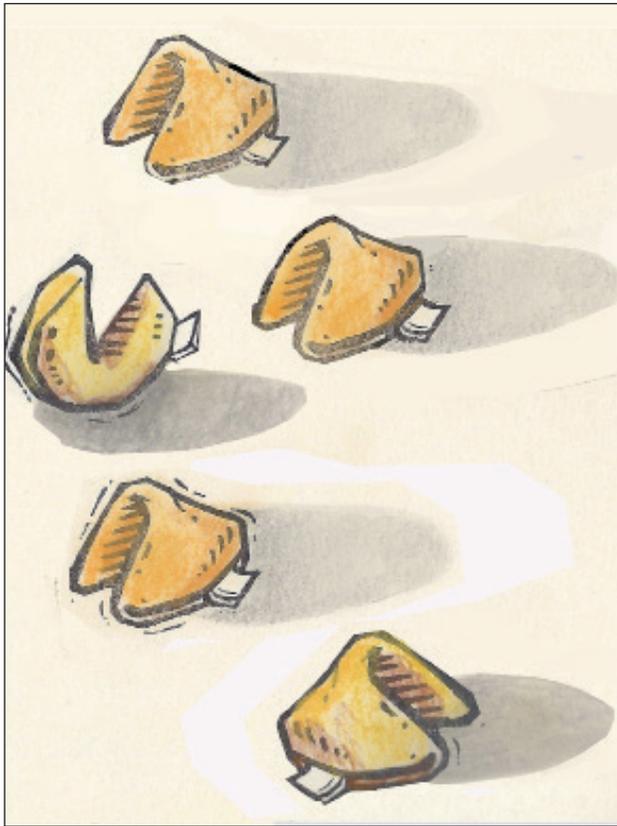
I carry the filled pan outside the sprinkler's rain, so it doesn't flood, and plop in Turtle. He starts to swim. I sit under the sprinkler until I'm soaked, then I hop over to the kitchen steps and straighten the white-painted rocks guarding my gladiolas. Funeral flowers, Momma calls them, but I like how they stand straight as Daddy used to stand in his dress blues. It's hotter than fucking Fallujah. I leave my too-big sunglasses on the steps and patrol the house on recon.

*Daddy's Girl*

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Embossed image for "Daddy's Girl!"



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