

## Wilderness House Literary Review 9/4

**The Thursday Appointments of Bill Sloan**  
**Timothy Gager**  
Big Table Publishing, ISBN-13: 978-0990487203

*Review by Rene Schwiesow*

A few years ago Timothy Gager contacted me and asked if I might like to read the draft of his novel and offer some edit suggestions. Who am I to turn down the opportunity to read a book, especially a book by a writer I respect and whose work I have admired? I accepted and, once I began reading, I happily took note of its unique formatting style. "The Thursday Appointments of Bill Sloan" showcases Gager's development of his fearless, individual voice. He introduces us to his well-crafted characters first through the clinical notes taken by Bill Sloan, their more-than-struggling-himself therapist.

Gager offers this one line synopsis: "A story of a man whose job it is to help people, but in reality, he is inept, sarcastic, and each and every day represents something to get through." Sloan is definitely inept and sarcastic and I'll throw unethical into the mix. The journey through Bill Sloan's days, however, brings transformation to Gager's characters, ultimately also transforming Sloan; but as with all transformational journeys the shifts are not without their tragedies. Gager takes quirky characters experiencing grief, past trauma, and existential angst and adds his unique humor intertwining the characters' lives through their clinical liason, and a twist on counseling Lucy Van Pelt style when the character Kate Hummingbird Warrior sets up a sidewalk therapy stand.

Sloan is therapist meet greed and self-centered absorption. More concerned with promoting Bill Sloan than healing his clients, he spirals downward and out of control. The question is can alternative healing, angry, self-deprecating clients, and a wolf be enough to save him from himself? Can his demise be enough to save his clients from their own self-absorbed morass?

No, Gager's work does not follow your typical novel template. How refreshing. The formatting captures the reader's attention from the get-go. Rusty Barnes, co-founder Night Train Magazine and author of "Reckoning," calls "The Thursday Appointments of Bill Sloan" a "gangbusters novel." Meg Tuite, author of "Bound by Blue" says "Get a Copy!" This reviewer agrees on both counts. Do yourself a favor and pick this novel up immediately!

