



## Scissors, Paper, Rock: A Novel (Kentucky Voices)

By *Fenton Johnson*

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**Scissors, Paper, Rock: A Novel (Kentucky Voices)** By Fenton Johnson

Along with his siblings, Raphael Hardin left his childhood home in rural Kentucky. Grappling with an AIDS diagnosis, he returns to care for his dying father. Told from the perspectives of Raphael, his family, and their lifelong neighbor, Fenton Johnson's landmark novel reveals the blood struggles and binding loves of a broken family made whole.

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## **Scissors, Paper, Rock: A Novel (Kentucky Voices) By Fenton Johnson Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Johnson's compassionate novel depicts a Appalachian family's struggle with AIDS, alcoholism and war. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Kirkus Reviews

A tender, haunting account of a rural southern family's demise as the parents sicken and die, the gay son contracts AIDS, and other siblings leave for greener urban pastures. Written in stories, each one dated, Johnson's second novel (*Crossing the River*, 1989) manages to be both intimate and panoramic. Raphael, 36, is the gay son of Tom and Rose Ella Hardin, but the point of view here moves easily from family member to family member--including sister Elizabeth, who near the end collects Raphael's ashes in 1990, and next-door neighbor Miss Camille Perkins, a fount of common wisdom. The story, set in the west Appalachian town of Strang Knob, begins with Tom working wood and musing on his wife's death and his own cancer, which is killing him: he "has lost the will to ward off the voices and visions." Meanwhile, Raphael, the youngest of seven, muses at various places throughout about his long coming-out process, which turned him into "a human being instead of a rock." Son Clark dies in 1970 in Vietnam in the chapter story "All Fall Down." In "Little Deaths," set in 1942, Tom in Rose Ella's presence saves a dog from drowning in a flooded river, thereby sealing the unbreakable bond between them. The book is especially strong in its exploration of the varieties of grief that accompany deaths and losses, though on occasion--as when Raphael in 1972 faces intimations of his sexual orientation in the person of self-described mechanic Willie-- Johnson also displays an antic streak. Thoughtful and poised: a careful family chronicle with a gay twist is brought to a poignant close with a haunting plea--"Who will remember me?" -- Copyright ©1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

Review

"Memory, love, grief, death and desire: these are the stuff of Fenton Johnson's . . . powerfully moving novel." *New York Times Book Review*

"The emotional power of *Scissors, Paper, Rock* resides on a plot of land in Kentucky. . . . [It] chronicles the courtships, the births, the deaths and the agonizing disappointments of two generations of the Hardins of Strang Knob . . . *Scissors, Paper, Rock* is a seductive rumination on the ways that memory can torment or soothe, and sometimes do both at the same time." *San Francisco Chronicle*

"Read the eleven brief pieces of this brilliant novel and you'll never again hear its title phrase without feeling chills. . . . Emotional jolts lurk on every page. . . . Every few pages you'll pause, realizing you've just read one of the best paragraphs you've ever come across. Yes, the book's about dying, but in the same way that birthday parties are about growing old." *Entertainment Weekly*

"I finished *Scissors, Paper, Rock* in an unstoppable burst of enthralled reading last night. It is a wonderful book." Richard Howard, poet and professor of creative writing, Columbia University

### Users Review

From reader reviews:

**Danny Nehring:**

Have you spare time for any day? What do you do when you have more or little spare time? That's why, you can choose the suitable activity for spend your time. Any person spent their very own spare time to take a move, shopping, or went to often the Mall. How about open or even read a book allowed Scissors, Paper, Rock: A Novel (Kentucky Voices)? Maybe it is to get best activity for you. You already know beside you can spend your time along with your favorite's book, you can smarter than before. Do you agree with their opinion or you have other opinion?

**Jacquelyn Lopez:**

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**James Gardner:**

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**George Hughes:**

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