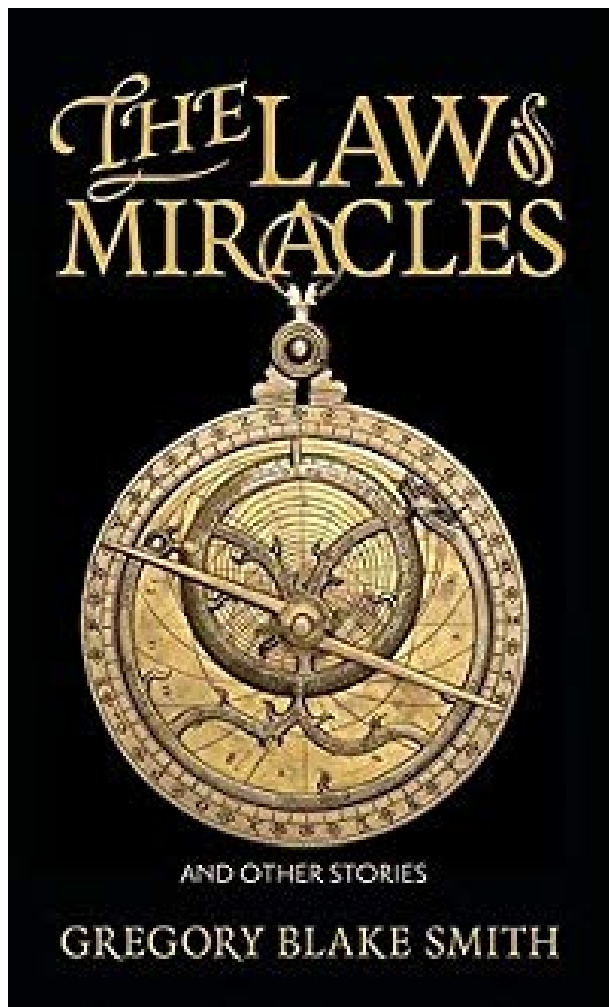


The Law of Miracles: And Other Stories



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These stories take place in the space where the rational and irrational intersect—the space governed by The Law of Miracles. Writing with a remarkable range of invention, Gregory Blake Smith has created a world in which his characters navigate between the everyday and the extraordinary: an aged Russian woman who lives simultaneously in the St. Petersburg of iPods and BMWs and in the starving Leningrad of the Siege; a Venetian art conservator who loves the women of the Renaissance paintings he restores but cannot bear the touch of the woman at his side; a down-and-out slot-machine technician who calculates the probability of his wife's dying. Yet for all their variety of setting and subject, there runs through each of these stories a thread of the miraculous, a suspicion that the transcendent lies just at the edge of perception.

We watch the characters of The Law of Miracles struggle toward that transcendence, whether it be through love or art or violence, until we as readers feel—like the main character of the Pushcart Prize-winning "Presently in Ruins"—that if we could only parse the seemingly random details of our existence some new pattern of meaning would emerge, some new magic that would transform our lives.