

on a research mission in a Gulfstream jet, narrowly avoid colliding with a Boeing 737. The 737, evidently in distress, lands on a frozen lake; a lone woman escapes the aircraft before it breaks the ice and sinks. Donovan and crew land on the lake in their smaller plane and succeed in rescuing the woman, who cries before collapsing: "Don't let anyone know about me. They'll kill us all, even our families." Donovan and his wife, Lauren, a Defense Intelligence Agency operative, join forces with various others to solve the mystery of the doomed 737—and the unidentified woman, who's later abducted from a Minneapolis hospital while still unconscious. Donovan and his team are in constant danger from unknown assailants, but the plot loses momentum amid long passages of unnecessary exposition. *Agent: Kimberley Cameron, Kimberley Cameron Associates. (Mar.)*

**Cruel Winter: A County Cork Mystery**

**Sheila Connolly.** Crooked Lane, \$25.99 (304p) ISBN 978-1-68331-100-3

Maura Donovan, the American proprietor of Sullivan's Pub in the Irish village of Leap, offers shelter—and more—to patrons stranded by a snowstorm, in Connolly's engaging fifth County Cork mystery (after 2016's *Turn for the Bad*). Maura, who inherited the pub from a friend of her late grandmother, has a knack for helping other people solve their life's problems. In this installment, though, the focus is on Diane Caldwell, an English woman whose travel plans are disrupted by the storm. A local man tells Maura, who moved from Boston nine months earlier, that Diane was suspected, but never charged, in the murder of a woman in a nearby village some 20 years before. Diane tells her story to her captive audience at Sullivan's. Coincidentally, a member of the gardaí is present to share some little-known details of the police investigation—and it turns out his wife has information she's never divulged. That fortuitous fact creates a happy ending. *Agent: Jessica Faust, BookEnds. (Mar.)*

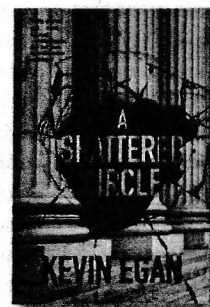
**The Devil's Country: The Drifter**

**Harry Hunsicker.** Thomas & Mercer, \$15.95 trade paper (320p) ISBN 978-1-5039-4190-8

Hunsicker, the creator of a series about a Dallas PI named Lee Henry Oswald

★ **A Shattered Circle**

**Kevin Egan.** Forge, \$27.99 (304p) ISBN 978-0-7653-8369-3



Since falling off a stepladder, New York City Supreme Court Justice Bill Lonergan, the protagonist of Egan's excellent third legal thriller (after 2015's *The Missing Piece*), has been displaying symptoms of dementia. With his job at risk, Lonergan's devoted wife, Barbara, who's also his secretary, does all she can to shield him from any adverse consequences, even as she searches desperately for some helpful treatment options. Her task is made harder when Andrew Norwood, a disgruntled unsuccessful litigant, files a complaint of judicial misconduct against her husband. Meanwhile, a dying man, Ralphie Rago, who was convicted 25 years earlier of murdering a law clerk at 60 Centre Street, the Manhattan courthouse where Judge Lonergan works, asks an old friend, court officer Foxx, to reinvestigate the case to find the real killer. And an attorney, Ken Palmer, is drowned while fishing in the Catskills by a present-day murderer embarking on a mysterious vendetta. Egan populates this standalone, his best to date, with characters readers will empathize with and cleverly resolves each of the multiple story lines. *Agent: Ben Bova, Barbara Bova Literary Agency. (Mar.)*

(*Crosshairs*) and another about disgraced ex-cop Jon Cantrell (*The Grid*), introduces another underdog, former Texas Ranger Arlo Baines, in this gritty crime novel. Baines, whose wife and two children were murdered less than a year earlier, drifts into the small West Texas town of Piedra Springs, where he encounters a frightened woman, Molly, and her two children in the parking lot of a bar. Two men in cowboy hats are chasing them. Baines disables the cowboys in a brief fight, but when it's over, Molly and her children have disappeared. Sheriff Quang Marsh advises Baines to leave Piedra Springs, but then Molly's body is found and her children are missing; Baines won't leave until he finds the kids. The tale of his family's slaughter emerges in bits and pieces as this admirable hero takes on a town paralyzed by fear of a deadly cult and struggles to emerge from his nightmarish past. *Agent: Richard Abate, 3 Arts Entertainment. (Mar.)*

★ **Death in the Dark**

**Stacey Bishop.** Locked Room International, \$24.99 trade paper (190p) ISBN 978-1-537598-02-4

Originally published in the U.K. in 1930, the first U.S. edition of this fiendishly clever puzzle mystery by Bishop, the pseudonym of American composer George Antheil (1900–1959), will

delight fans of impossible-seeming crimes. New York City criminologist Stephan Bayard gets an early morning call from prosecutor Howard Wayson, who reports that concert manager Dave Denny has been killed in his Upper East Side apartment under bizarre circumstances. Denny was shot in the forehead from a distance in a dark room, though there seems to have been no way that anyone could have fired a gun so accurately under the circumstances. The dead man's expression suggests that he both saw his murderer and was shocked by the killer's identity. Wayson, who was a guest at a recent party in the apartment, can't figure out how any of its five surviving occupants could have pulled the trigger. Though the solution isn't quite a match for the mystifying setup, Bishop does a plausible job of explaining how the crime was committed. *(Mar.)*

**Illicit Trade: A Valentin Vermeulen Thriller**

**Michael Niemann.** Coffeetown, \$14.95 trade paper (244p) ISBN 978-1-60381-589-5

In Niemann's intriguing second Valentin Vermeulen thriller (after *Legitimate Business*), the New York-based Flemish employee of the U.N.'s Office of Internal Oversight Services fields a complaint from Immigration and Customs