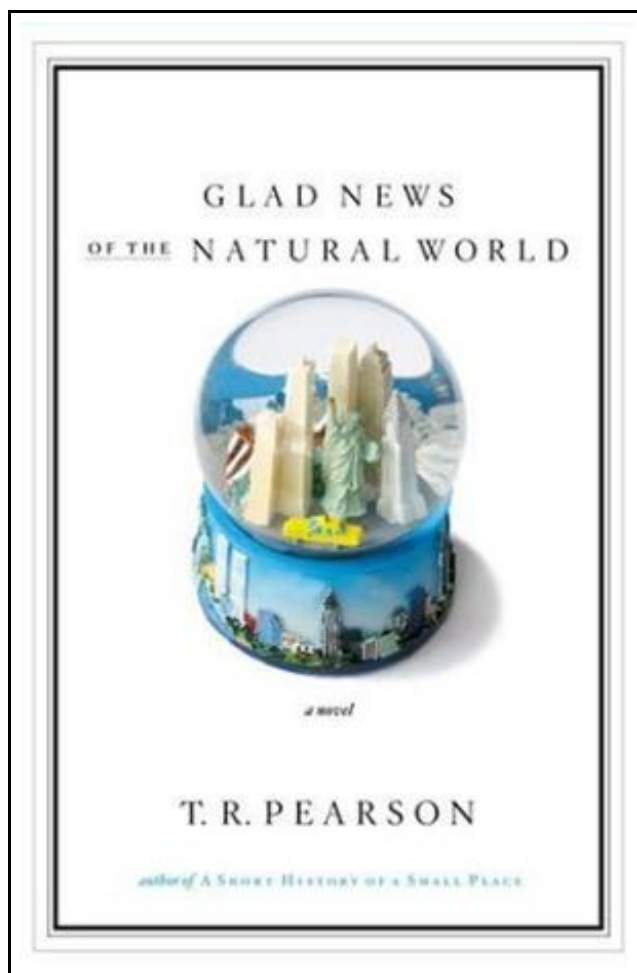


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Reviews

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(Kacie Carroll)

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Riverside, New Jersey, U.S.A.: Simon & Schuster, Riverside, New Jersey, U.S.A., 2005. Hardcover. Book Condition: New. Dust Jacket Condition: New. From Publishers Weekly: Louis Benfield is back and grown up (more or less) in this hilarious if meandering tale of a modern-day Southern slacker, the sequel to *A Short History of a Small Place*. The book follows Louis as he moves to New York City from Neely, N.C., to start his first real job, at Meridian Life and Casualty, where he quickly works his way down from trainee to assistant handyman. Surprisingly, the demotion doesn't much bother him because, as Louis describes himself, "I'd gone to college halfway across the state, had come home with a degree but precious little professional ambition." After he loses his job at Meridian, Louis falls into a nominal career as a commercial actor. He supplements his income driving for a Yemeni car service and making occasional repairs to stolen merchandise for a low-level mob boss. At one point, the mob boss decides Louis would be the perfect match for his preening daughter, but when she rejects him out of hand, nothing of consequence happens. The problem with focusing on such a shiftless narrator is that the story can't help reflecting his purposelessness, so the novel rambles gracefully without ever quite getting anywhere. Agent, Betsy Lerner. 3-city author tour. (May) From Booklist: **Starred Review** In this sequel to Pearson's beloved best-seller *A Short History of A Small Place* (1985), a grown-up but ever feckless Louis Benfield leaves his native Neely, North Carolina, to work at the same New York insurance firm where his retired father enjoyed an illustrious 30-year career. But Louis soon becomes a casualty at Meridian Life and Casualty; he is better at fixing the boss' appliances than at figuring the actuarial tables....



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