

Taking Tom Murray Home

By Tim Slee

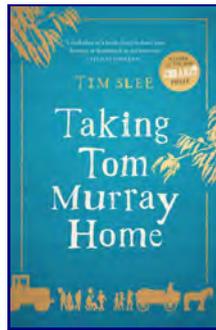
Publisher: Harper Collins

ISBN 9781460757864 SCIS: 1926744

\$32.99

Blurb:

The winner of the inaugural Banjo Prize, *Taking Tom Murray Home* is a funny, moving, bittersweet Australian story of fires, families and the restorative power of community. Bankrupt dairy farmer Tom Murray decides he'd rather sell off his herd and burn down his own house than hand them over to the bank. But something goes tragically wrong, and Tom dies in the blaze. His wife, Dawn, doesn't want him to have died for nothing and decides to hold a funeral procession for Tom as a protest, driving 350 kilometres from Yardley in country Victoria to bury him in Melbourne where he was born. To make a bigger impact she agrees with some neighbours to put his coffin on a horse and cart and take it slow - real slow. But on the night of their departure, someone burns down the local bank. And as the motley funeral procession passes through Victoria, there are more mysterious arson attacks. Dawn has five days to get to Melbourne. Five days, five more towns, and a state ready to explode in flames... Told with a laconic, deadpan wit, *Taking Tom Murray Home* is a timely, thought-provoking, heart-warming, quintessentially Australian story like no other. It's a novel about grief, pain, anger and loss, yes, but it's also about hope - and how community, friends and love trump pain and anger, every time.



Lamont Review:

Told through the eyes of a thirteen-year-old twin named Jack this book has an amazing setting. Both Jack and his twin sister Jenny have Dorotea's Analgesia, a rare genetic mutation that makes you feel no pain and not be able to cry. Their father has just died as he was burning down the house on their dairy farm, 350 km's from Melbourne, before the bank repossessed it.

Dawn, their Mum, is an amazingly strong women who decides to protest against the banks and the supermarkets with their \$1.00 milk policy, and the government by holding a 10-day funeral procession for their Dad. The procession is going all the way to Melbourne - with their Dad's coffin atop an open flatbed trailer towed by a horse.

The procession builds both in number and media attention with Jenny starting up an online fundraising page that receives \$170,000 in donations. This, combined with copycat fires around the country, and rebellious quotes from Henry Lawson and Ned Kelly, makes this motley group huge news.

At its core *Taking Tom Murray Home* is a story of grief and protest that shouldn't be funny or uplifting, and yet it is. It is rousing, hopeful and deeply down to earth - much like the Australian characters that it so sensitively portrays.

Set to become an Australian classic, it will be loved by teenagers aged 15+, all the way through to much older readers.

Reviewed by Rob