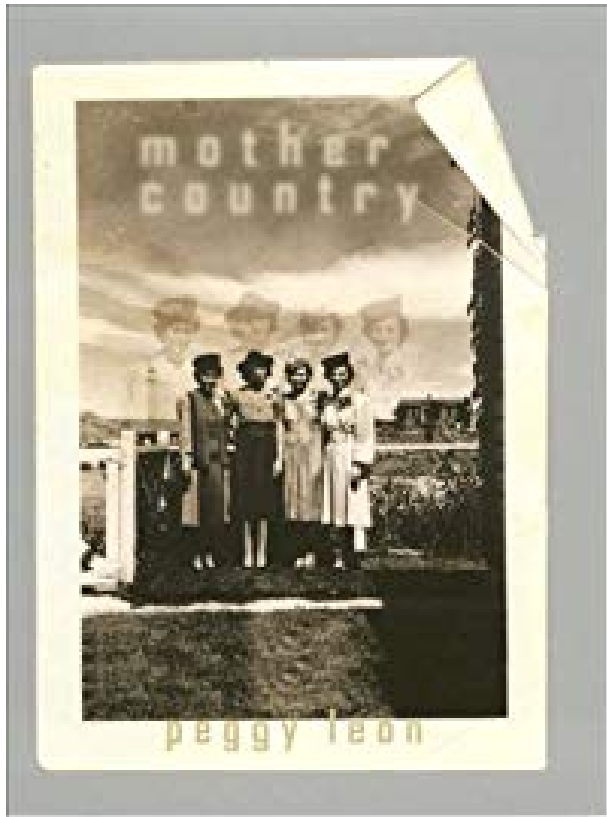


Mother Country



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This evocative first novel, by turns haunting and amusing, is structured around three deaths in the summer of 1950, the unusual funerals, and the far more serious consequences that follow. Told in a series of vignettes, tall tales, and remembrances, it's peopled by a host of characters as wild as the lives they lead. The immigrant community of 6th Street, Taylor, Nevada is home to a mixed bag of Eastern Europeans. They live the 'old way' and care for those uniquely their own: the injured, those wandering in heart of mind, and their young who are rest to leave the past behind and move forward into this new world. The time is one of second generations and of transitions in a dirt-poor mining town. The central character is Mala, orphaned daughter of a local hero and an 'outsider' mother who died under mysterious circumstances. Mala has been raised by her widowed grandmother, whose death sets in motion a series of events that forever alters the course of her life. Left in the care of an entire street of women--miners' widows with their covered dishes, gossip, and stories--Mala eagerly absorbs the history of these emigres and learns their traditions. Urged by her aunt Anna, monarch of the family clan to join her household, Mala is instead drawn to her rebellious cousin, Josie, Anna's daughter, who is eager to leave the confines of this western ghetto. As Mala sorts through her choices, she bears witness to significant changes occurring in town, changes that threaten the fragile peace between the immigrant families living on 6th Street and the long established bosses and merchants residing above Main. Matters are brought to a head when a new sheriff appears on the scene. When Josie is about to leave the community for college, Mala must learn to integrate her own and her town's history while piecing together a possible future for herself.