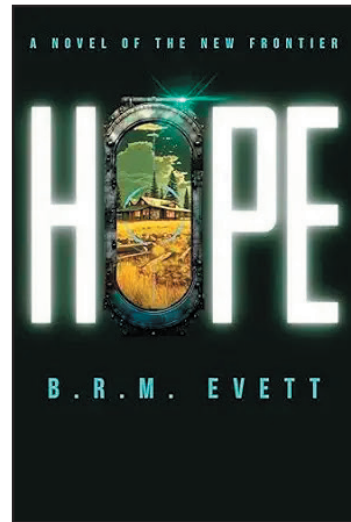


Hope by BRM Evett

review by Lo Galluccio

For those of you who loved the Netflix series “The Last of Us” which took place in the middle of the 22nd century after a fungal pandemic has destroyed the government and devastated the country with tribal divisions and a band of rabid infected, called “Clickers” striking the healthy survivors, you will want to read BRM’s novel, *Hope*, a sequel to his first novel, *Joy*. Evett gives us an America that has fallen apart due to a Civil War, that right now, doesn’t seem that far-fetched. Ultimately, it is a novel about love and empathy winning out over evil and greed with two opposing strategies to defeat the virus called, *Mindworm*, which attacks the central nervous system and the brain. Our heroine, Lucinda, is a brilliant flaming red-head from a privileged enclave she has been exiled from. She has a special power, called a *Cor*, which attaches to her brain and which can show her anything, like a personal video machine. But is this enough to ensure her survival?



She is rescued after being exposed to *Mindworm*, by an evil doctor, part robot, who falls in love with her and uses her to try and retain his power over the afflicted, who he keeps alive but subservient to him. There is also a female doctor on the other side, who is using his machinery to discover a vaccine for the virus. And with her is a group of children, some deaf, who have been scrounging to survive. Creek is the youngest and most interesting character, a scarred waif who has had to perform petty crimes to subsist in this broken dystopia. When he and Lucinda ultimately join together for the cause it is a powerful and poignant moment.

This is a gripping story, part sci-fi and part adventure, with some romantic elements. Evett handles the technological advances upon which the story rests, with amazing brilliance and ease. His writing is lyrical and entrancing. I loved *Joy* and this sequel was an expansive and wonderful evolution. The poet Li-Young Lee once said, “I can’t think of a time in the future when someone won’t be killing someone else.” Evett seems to concur with this but offers a hopeful ultimatum after a thrilling battle between divergent forces. I can’t wait to read the third book in the trilogy, *Love*. There are touches of William Gibson and Alice Hoffman in this book, but it is very much an original masterpiece of Evett’s imagination and craft. This is a must-read book for 2025.

Hope is available at Barnes and Noble and Amazon.com.

**** Lo Galluccio is an American poet, memoirist, and vocal artist who served as the Poet Populist of Cambridge, Massachusetts, from 2013 to 2015. A graduate of Harvard University with an MFA from Stonecoast, her work uniquely bridges the worlds of literature and experimental music.