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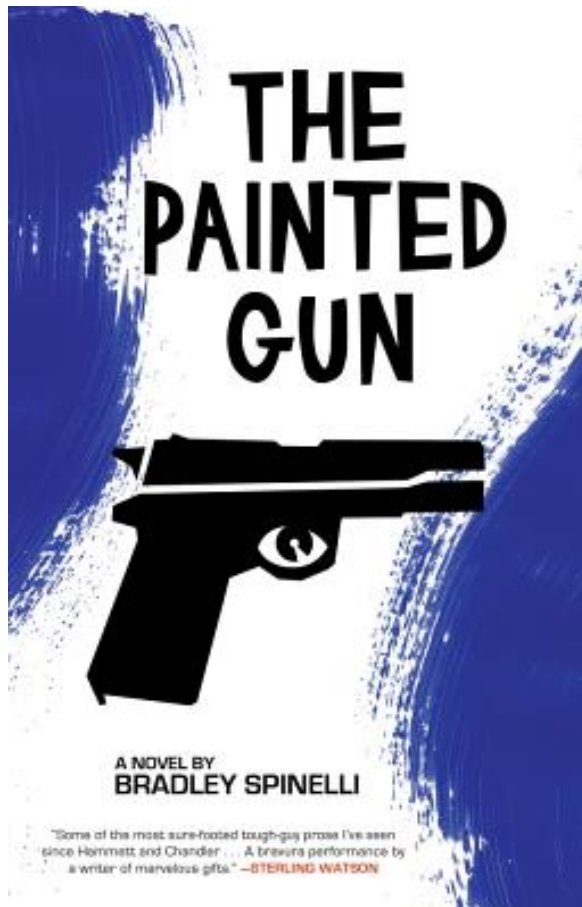
## MysteryPeople Review: THE PAINTED GUN by Bradley Spinelli

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◦ *Review by Crime Fiction Coordinator Scott Montgomery*



(<http://www.bookpeople.com/book/9781617754982>) Postmodern private eye novels are always a tight rope for an author. Referencing classic works and their style often reminds the reader of the old masters that did it better. It is a matter of tone that is usually the deciding factor for if these works measure up to those they imitate, something Bradley Spinelli uses to great effect in his new novel, ***The Painted Gun*** (<http://www.bookpeople.com/book/9781617754982>).

First, he introduces us to a hero who balances familiarity and freshness, then drops him into a provocative premise. David Crane works as an information consultant in mid-nineties San Francisco, talking and narrating in a hard-boiled style that never becomes tongue in cheek. Down near his last dollar, he takes a case from a shady detective from L.A. It seems that people are looking for a mysterious artist only known as Ash. The only clue, her paintings are of Crane at various moments of his life.

The San Francisco setting helps make the story work. The home of the great Dashiell Hammett lends itself to the nostalgia of the story. One can accept Crane's hard-boiled voice echoing Sam Spade's and The Continental Op's as he travels down the same alleyways they did over fifty years before. Since San Francisco has long been known for its diverse communities and counter-culture eccentrics, Spinelli is able to populate the mystery with modern artists, old school gangsters in shark skin suits, and lesbian gun club owners.

*The Painted Gun* is a fun romp of an old-school detective novel with a few post-modern tweaks. It's full of fist fights, shoot outs, and wise cracks, taking a few peculiar twists that prove many times to be poignant. In David Crane's world, art, love, politics, and murder are hard to separate.

*You can find copies of **The Painted Gun** on our shelves and [via bookpeople.com](http://www.bookpeople.com/book/9781617754982) (<http://www.bookpeople.com/book/9781617754982>).*

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