

LTN Book Club: 'Dying Words' full of life

By Kathryn Reed

It's been a long time since I've read a book that I didn't want to end. And for someone who isn't much of a fan of fiction, that speaks volumes.



"Dying Words" (NaCl Press, 2012) by K. Patrick Conner is a novel that takes readers into the life of an obituary writer at the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Those jobs don't exist anymore. Newspaper jobs barely exist, let alone such a specialty.

Conner was a reporter at the *Chronicle*, so he was able to accurately capture some of the nuances of the paper, and certainly The City. (Since I was an editor there, I can vouch for much of the authenticity.)

"Dying Words" is much more than life at a newspaper. It's about life itself.

Grayden Hubbell is the main character. Now in his 70s, his sole job at the paper is to write obituaries. The love of his life died decades ago, and yet there is still love to be had even in his dying days.

Conner has a way with words that is poetic, as well as captivating. He makes you care about the characters and

connect to them.

It's hard for me to know if the tears I shed were for the story or the reality about the state of newspapers or both.

No matter your feelings about newspapers, this is a story about people, and the importance of the connections people have in their lifetimes.

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- Please join in the discussion via commenting. Feel free to pose questions.

- **Questions:** If you knew you were dying, would you change your life and how? Should Grayden have been let go when he was given bad information? Have you thought about what you would want your obituary to say?

- The next book is "Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging" by Sebastian Junger. The review will be posted April 1.