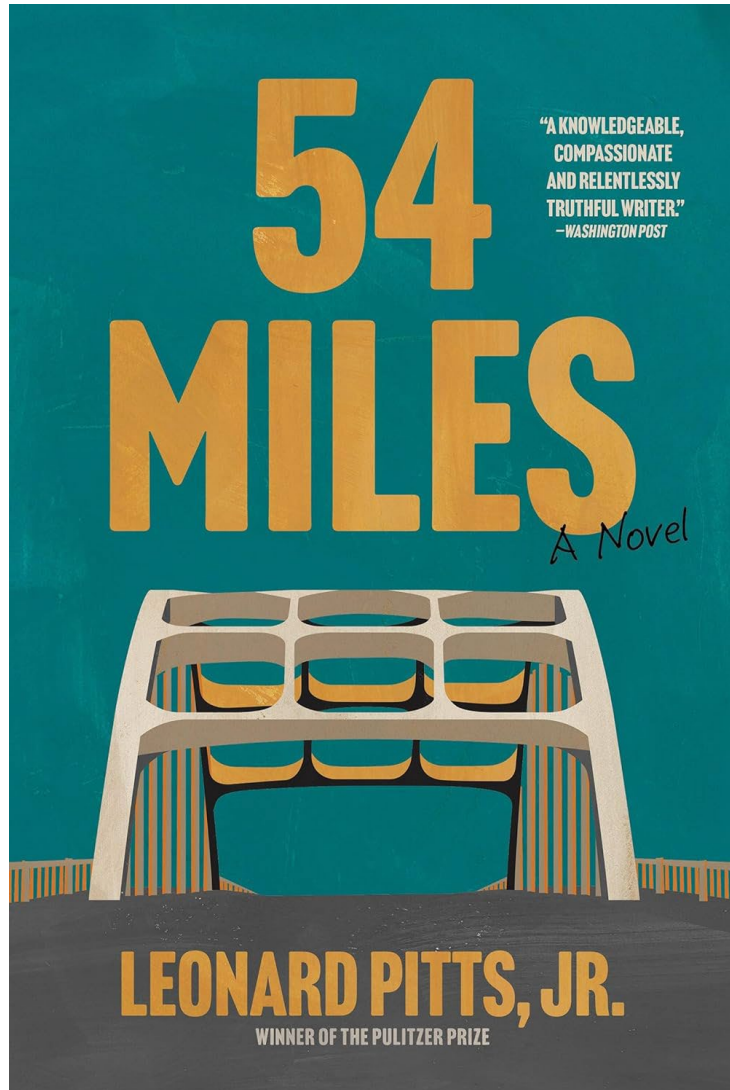


Set in mid-60s Harlem and Alabama, two families grapple with the promise and brutality of the civil rights era in the American South, reckoning with family secrets, unresolved trauma, and the heavy question of what justice demands.



The free-standing successor and next novel by the author of the critically acclaimed *The Last Thing You Surrender*, Leonard Pitts, Jr.'s *54 Miles* launches forward twenty years to the fateful weeks of March 1965—from the infamous “Bloody Sunday” march at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma on the 7th to the triumphant entry into Montgomery on the 25th that climaxed the voting rights campaign—and the families who find themselves confronting the past amid another flashpoint in American history.

Young Adam, who has been raised in Harlem by his white father, George, and Black mother, Thelma, goes back to his parents’ home state of Alabama to participate in the voting rights campaign, only to be brutalized in the Bloody Sunday melee. He is still recovering from this when he is struck a heavy emotional blow, learning for the first time—and in the cruelest way imaginable—of a family secret that sends him

spiraling and plunging further into danger. To save him, and any hope for their relationship, Thelma is drawn back, for the first time in twenty years, to the South she both hates and fears, and to a reckoning that may result in an incalculable loss.

Meanwhile, Thelma’s brother Luther is also spiraling, but in a different way. Forty-two years after his parents were lynched before his eyes, and twenty years after the man who led the lynch mob walked out of court a free man, Luther has just made a shocking discovery. He’s found the murderer, Floyd Bitters, helpless and enfeebled in a rest home—unable to move or even to speak. The old man is literally at Luther’s mercy. And Luther, who has never overcome this trauma that defined his life, is suddenly forced to relive it all again as he grapples with the awful question of what justice now demands.