

## **The Washashore**

Christopher Mirabile

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Reviewed by Paul Knobloch for Reader Views (02/2026)

5\*- There's a New Sheriff in Town

Good crime writing should draw you right in, and Christopher Mirabile's *The Washashore: A Silas Lopez Mystery* does just that, serving up a solid police procedural with some subtle coastal noir touches. The mystery unfolds in the aftermath of a brutal storm, when the mangled and lifeless body of local resident Timothy Perkins is found.

Helming the investigation is Silas Lopez, a recent transplant from Salt Lake City who is now the Chief of Police in the town of Provincetown, Massachusetts. A tough and seasoned officer, Lopez is a laconic grinder who begins a methodical investigation. His dialogue is classic cop noir, and even after one of the novel's more hair-raising scenes, he is as cool as a cucumber: "*Did what I came here to do. So, bring on the fuss...*"

The town and its environs also serve as another character, adding great atmosphere and providing some very lyrical passages:

*The town had smelled different from what he was used to, the ocean all around. The smell of hot pine pitch also hung in the wind. These were different pines around here. Sweeter, like vanilla and cork and the earthiness of moss. The town had sounded different too: gulls constantly squawking along the water; crows cawing from pine tops; bike bells jingling; street musicians playing; and people eating, drinking, laughing at outdoor tables everywhere.*

The investigation first points to suspect Blake Stevenson, Timothy's husband and now widow. As is often the case in police investigations, the spouse is looked at very carefully. However, as things progress, Lopez begins to suspect the victim was struck not by a typical passenger car or SUV but by a larger vehicle pulling a trailer, a realization that shifts the direction of the investigation and brings a new suspect into focus. That focus will sharpen and eventually lead to a tense standoff, whose details I will not divulge here, of course.

I felt that Mirabile did an excellent job at illustrating some of the novel's deeper themes and concerns. The book presents Silas not as the typical disgraced former sheriff starting over – a worn-out trope that we've seen a million times -- but rather as a man who is asking himself what it means to lead a town. He needs to earn respect through action, and I admire the fact that the author found a novel way to approach the "new sheriff in town" story.

We are also reminded that violence is not always mythic or grandiose, but often rather mundane, as political theorist and philosopher Hannah Arendt pointed out. It sort of reminds us that

community building is about hard work, professional ethics over heroics, and a reminder that community is built, not inherited. These are some excellent lessons for a society that seems to have forgotten many of these time-honored truths.

*The Washashore* shatters the illusion of small-town security, and it happens to be doing so while our own society is breaking apart all by itself. Part of the reason for this is that people don't read books anymore. My suggestion: give a copy of this fine piece of crime fiction to your friends and family who have lost faith in the system and need to know that community and justice are still defensible ideals and attainable goals.