



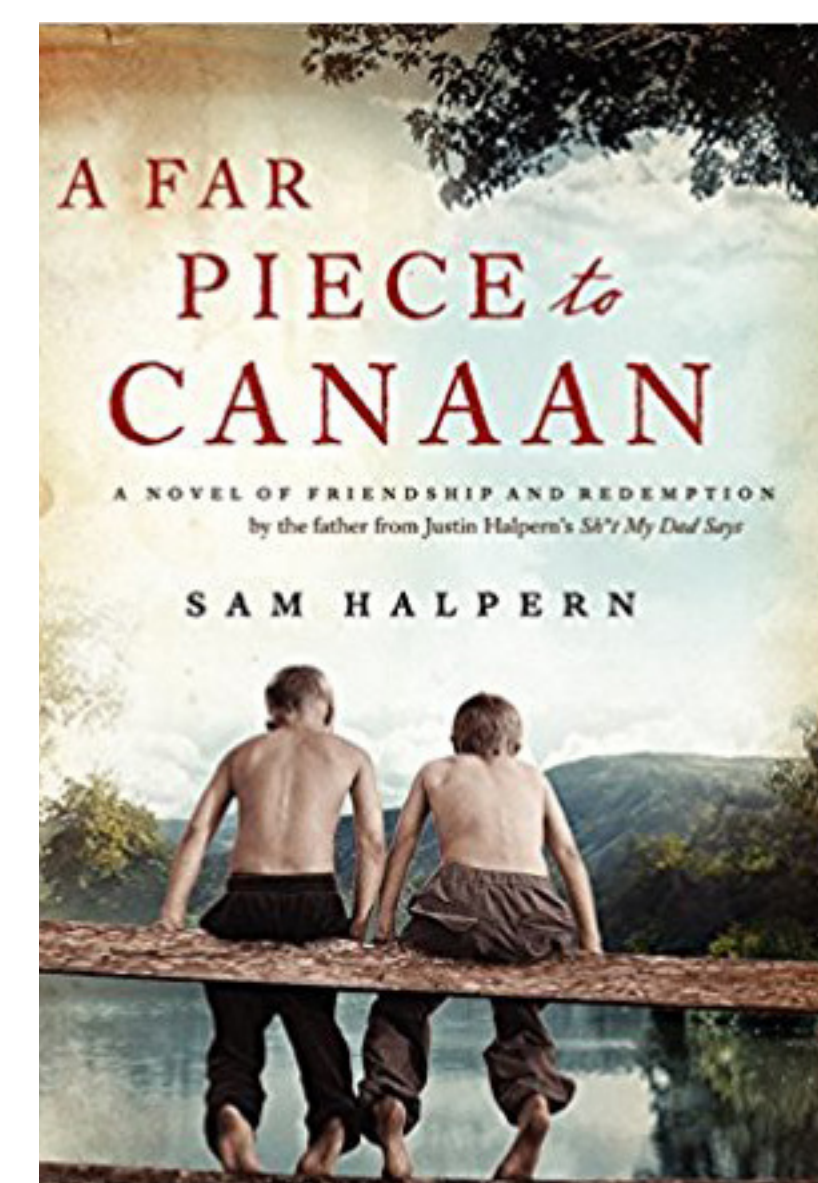
Sam Halpern

SAMUEL HALPERN was born on January 9, 1936 in a small farmhouse near Georgetown, Kentucky. Sam calls his childhood in a family of Jewish sharecroppers idyllic. Sam recalls long days working tobacco when he was just 8 years old, during a time when it was not yet possible for tractors to work the fields safely. It was hard work, but they always had plenty to eat, even during the Great Depression.

Sam's friends were all sharecroppers' kids. They shared an agrarian life and didn't realize they were poor most of the time. No anti-Semitism was directed toward him personally that he recalls. The Bluegrass Jewish community was very small at the time. Sam's exposure to the Jewish community was limited to the times his family went into Lexington to attend Jewish ritual services.

I would meet other Jewish kids. And our experiences were much different, they from mine. I was still a sharecropper's kid. The distinctions in socioeconomic groups extended not just to the gentile community but also the Jewish community... They didn't have common experiences with me... nor I with them. And so I'm not condemning anybody. But I just didn't have any Jewish friends. I did feel separated from them, while I did not feel separated from the gentile kids that I lived among.

Sam always assumed he would be a farmer until his older sister began dating a baseball player who was obtaining a PhD in physics. Getting to know him while throwing the ball around inspired Sam to go to college. Attending the University of Kentucky allowed Sam to explore a wide array of interests which ultimately led him to medical school and, eventually, a lifelong career in Radiology.



One could say Sam's done it all: From sharecropping to university (physics, archeology, and medicine) and then to writing and literature. In *A Far Piece to Canaan*, Sam uses a fictional representation to communicate pieces of his real-life experiences growing up in Kentucky. And while there may be some familiar southern themes, the story that Sam most hopes comes through for readers takes place on the sharecropping farm of his youth. It's the story of a Jew living and working among gentiles without persecution. It's the story of acceptance.