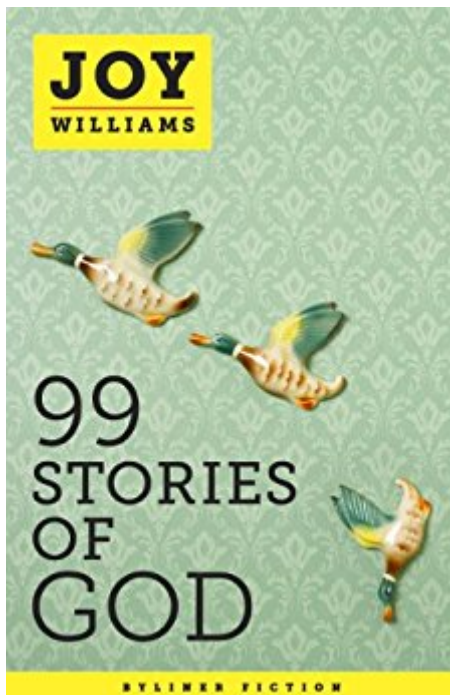


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99 Stories Of God (Kindle Single)



Synopsis

The first new book in a decade from the acclaimed author of *State of Grace*, *Escapes*, *Taking Care*, and *Breaking and Entering*. Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award finalist Joy Williams has a one-of-a-kind gift for capturing both the absurdity and the darkness of everyday life. In "99 Stories of God," she takes on one of mankind's most confounding preoccupations: the Supreme Being. This series of short, fictional vignettes explores our day-to-day interactions with an ever-elusive and arbitrary God. It's the Book of Common Prayer as seen through a looking glass—a powerfully vivid collection of seemingly random life moments that is by turns comic and yearning and Kafkaesque. Kafka himself makes an appearance (talking to a fish), as do Tolstoy, the Aztecs, Abraham and Sarah, and O. J. Simpson. Most of Williams's characters, however, are like the rest of us: anonymous strivers and bumbler who brush up against God in the least expected places or go searching for Him when He's standing right there. The Lord shows up at a hot-dog-eating contest, a demolition derby, a formal gala, and a drugstore, where he's in line to get a shingles vaccination: "Have you ever had chicken pox?" asked the pharmacist. "Of course," the Lord said. "How did you hear about us?" Herself the daughter of a minister, Joy Williams instinctively understands one sure truth about God: He always gets the last laugh.

PRAISE FOR "99 STORIES OF GOD"

"I would follow the trail of Joy Williams's words—always beautiful, compelling, and so wise—anywhere they led." —Chuck Palahniuk, author of "Choke," "Fight Club," and the Byliner Original "Phoenix"

"These modern fables and skewed vignettes make the implausible plausible. Compression, as done by Joy Williams, extends the reach of her stories." —Amy Hempel, author of "At the Gates of the Animal Kingdom"

"Joy Williams's '99 Stories of God' reads like a blog-era bible as conceived by Borges, Barthelme, and Mark Twain. No writer alive captures the voices in the post-millennial psychic wilderness like Joy Williams." —Jerry Stahl, author of "Permanent Midnight"

"The word count of this slender, extraordinary collection belies the density and combustibility of its contents, their midnight hilarity and edgeless reach. Joy Williams is our feral philosopher." —Karen Russell, Pulitzer Prize nominee for *Swamplandia!*

"Each story, like living tissue, is a reliquary that makes something splendid of our most secret agonies and desires." —Darcey Steinke, author of "Suicide Blonde"

"These stories are as full of surprises as a Noah's Ark filled with mystical beasts, three of each." —Edmund White, author of "A Boy's Own Story"

"Like looking deep into the night sky, Joy Williams shows us that there are some answers we will never know. In that awe there is a transcendent comfort that many of us can only describe as divine."

Mark Richard, author of "Fishboy" • ABOUT THE AUTHOR Joy Williams is the author of such classics of American fiction as "State of Grace," "Taking Care," "Escapes," and "Breaking and Entering." Harold Brodkey called her "the most gifted writer of her generation," and Raymond Carver declared her "simply a wonder." She has also written several widely anthologized essays on ecological matters. Williams lives in Arizona, Wyoming, and Florida.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

But these are the words of a dying recovered alcoholic. And her next words are a request for a martini. Her daughter refused thinking she would regret it. Such are the confusing vignettes in this transforming collection. Each one is a scant page or a bit more, but each address the ineffable life of God and his humans. God believes in reincarnation because once he saw a hot dog contest and it was the stupidest thing he ever saw. He provided us with dew formed from the crystals formed in response of the magnetic earth, so that we can walk barefoot and gain a bit of earth's energy. My favorite is the story of Abraham and Sarah being visited by angels. Sarah laughed and they considered her dim witted. They meant the chance for transformation. But it turned out literally. And it was Abraham's idea to make Isaac carry the very wood for his death up the mountain. But God stepped in. I always did wonder about that story. Every one of these stories made me stop and say,

"huh" to myself. I keep thinking they are one thing, and then another. And maybe God is represented by the people in the story. Maybe it is an allegory. But one thing is for sure, God has a sense of humor. And even though we can never understand him, it is our job to stretch our minds into that great unknowingness, another idea from the collection. So this collection does that and this makes it successful. It only takes a little time to read, but you will kind of go "huh" for a long time. It is definitely worth the "huh".

Joy Williams is a special talent, most of all in the collections of short stories still on my shelf. These are even shorter, a series of vignettes on both real and imaginary circumstances. I'm going through them little by little so as to make them last. Of course they are a "joy" to read.

I bought 99 Stories of God for its intriguing title. I hadn't come across Joy Williams prior and was taken completely by surprise by the initial chapters. 99 Stories of God presents 99 chapters of 99 different vignettes. Each is barely a page long. Most are a couple of paragraphs. Some are a few sentences. The stories touch on every subject, ranging from love to shopping, death to family, alcoholism to chance, and are written from disparate viewpoint - fathers, mothers, relatives, sons, strangers. The title of each chapter links and hints to each chapter's 'message'. Most of the chapters end abruptly, either with conclusions that aren't explained, or with no conclusion at all. I am no literary critic but I feel what Williams here tries to do is to illustrate, in a succinct and clear voice, the ineffable, unexplainable, mind-bogglingly-disconnected-yet-related series of little events that make up Life. Amongst these many mini-stories, you are bound to come across some that just resonate, that release a lighted bulb in your head with the words: "Yes this is familiar to me!" Pick up 99 Stories if you are looking for a collection of pithy stories that give material and content to ponder and ruminate about. However if you are looking for meaty, layered, action-filled book with smooth continuity and a purposeful conclusion, this book is not what you are looking for.

God was flying too high or too low for me, that's all

Haunting, beautifully written. Another work of genius by Joy Williams. A must read!

I always thought I was reasonably intelligent until I tried to read this book. It is a heap of gobbledigook which makes no sense at all. The amazing thing is that any publisher was prepared to put ink to paper to see it on a shelf. Sheer Tripe!

super cool use of a weird format to write a book in. chapters at the end, work kind of like hashtags, Joy Williams existing in the same world as twitter seems mild meltingly crazy. Apparently she'd be good at it though!

I found it to be endless moments that missed me. I found this disappointing and would not recommend it to anyone

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