



Passion; Contemporary Writers on the Story of Calvary

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Five distinguished writers-- Julia Alvarez, Stephanie Saldaña, John Elder, Jay Parini, and Elizabeth Cook—offer moving reflections on the four Gospel narratives of the Passion of Christ.

In telling the story of Jesus, all four of the evangelists reserved special attention for the story of his passion and death. These narratives hold a unique place in Christian devotion. In this book five distinguished American writers wrestle with troubling aspects of the Passion narratives in ways that draw readers more closely into the text. In writing on Luke, for example, Stephanie Saldaña, who lives and writes in Jerusalem, takes the reader to the sites of Holy Week, meditating on the story and her experiences of living in a torn city. Julia Alvarez begins with her memories of the Stations of the Cross as a young girl in the Dominican Republic (and then in New York city) and then reflects on how reading the Gospel of Mark makes her look more carefully at the stories behind the Stations. John Elder's piece begins with a confession that he finds Matthew's passion deeply disturbing because of the tension and anger in the story and contrasts it to the vision of Jesus he learned from his family, weaving throughout meditations on how he might yet make sense of Matthew. Jay Parini reflects on the ways he has read the fourth gospel at different stages of his life. Finally, Elizabeth Cook wrestles with the challenge of rewriting the Passion for the twenty-first century, not for readers but for an audience who will hear her libretto sung to very contemporary music.

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