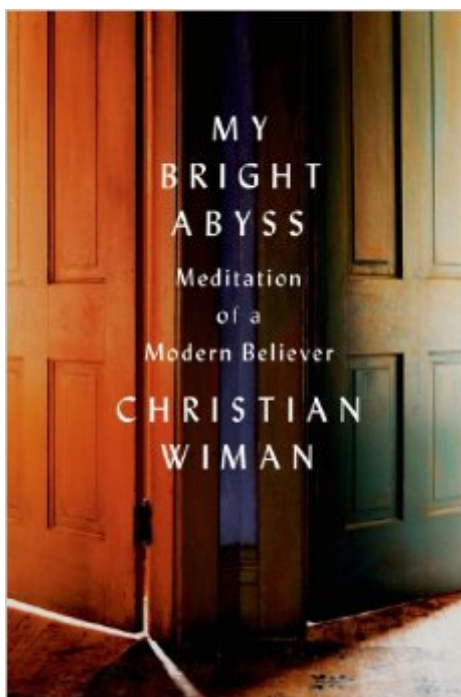


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My Bright Abyss: Meditation Of A Modern Believer



Synopsis

Eight years ago, Christian Wiman, a well-known poet and the editor of Poetry magazine, wrote a now-famous essay about having faith in the face of death. *My Bright Abyss*, composed in the difficult years since and completed in the wake of a bone marrow transplant, is a moving meditation on what a viable contemporary faith might look like. Joyful, sorrowful, and beautifully written, *My Bright Abyss* is destined to become a spiritual classic, useful not only to believers but to anyone whose experience of life and art seems at times to overbrim its boundaries. How do we answer this "burn of being"? Wiman asks. What might it mean for our lives and for our deaths if we acknowledge the "insistent, persistent ghost" that some of us call God? One of Publishers Weekly's Best Religion Books of 2013

Book Information

Paperback: 192 pages

Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux; Reprint edition (April 1, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0374534373

ISBN-13: 978-0374534370

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.5 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 7 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (211 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #55,450 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #10 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Literature & Fiction > Poetry](#) #392 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Leaders & Notable People > Religious](#) #1170 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Living > Spiritual Growth](#)

Customer Reviews

Much as Christ is characterized as being both human and something more, Christian Wiman's *MY BRIGHT ABYSS* is both a cancer memoir and something much more. It's a highly literate, highly erudite exploration of one man's re-connection to his faith during a period of physical agony. Wiman's language isn't just elevated, it burns through the sky in a revolving orbit that us earthbound stargazers can only wonder at. I don't read contemporary Christian nonfiction. Something tells me it's mostly designed for mass consumption: edible morsels salted with cant and mixed with easily parsed parables, where sin tempts Jane Doe, but Jane perseveres through her unerring faith.

Wiman's work is challenging, which one would expect in a book about a thoughtful, serious man accepting Christianity. His theology is intensely personal and refreshingly benevolent: he never proselytizes, judges, or condemns. Most of the book is spent teasing out the answers to paradoxes of faith. Here, Wiman finds himself mired in opacity: embrace dogma, but not too much; believe in the parable of Jesus, except the parts you don't want to; don't focus on whether there's an afterlife, but prepare for something after death. If confronted with this criticism, Wiman would likely say that his inability to reconcile these issues is partly what inspires his faith. It's his leap. It's an unsolvable mystery of the soul, one that can only be partly revealed through faith. Unbelievers won't be converted by Wiman. He doesn't resolve any of the inherent problems with faith in the twenty-first century. But the book is worth reading in the same way that CS Lewis or Dorothy Sayers is worth reading for anyone who wants to seriously engage with one of life's most vexing issues.

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