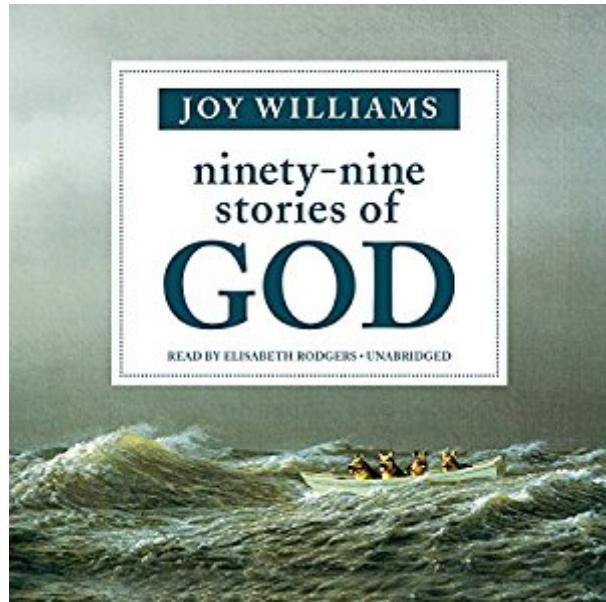


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# Ninety-Nine Stories Of God



## **Synopsis**

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 *Ninety-Nine 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. The figures that haunt these stories range from Kafka (talking to a fish) to the Aztecs, Tolstoy to Abraham and Sarah, O. J. Simpson to a pack of wolves. Most of Williams' 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. At turns comic and yearning, lyric and aphoristic, *Ninety-Nine Stories of God* serves as a pure distillation of one of our great artists.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Beautiful weird and revelatory flash fictions and nonfictions, will not disappoint any fan of this author. Reminds me in form of Sarah Ruhl's 100 Essays I Don't Have Time to Write, only the individual pieces are shorter and even more distilled. Brilliant, funny, elliptical but never pretentious, offhandedly devastating. If you are looking for an "inspirational" collection of traditional stories about

God, look elsewhere.

These 99 short vignettes about manâ™s failing attempt to grasp the infinite God may be unsettling to read, and potentially controversial. Just because God is not a character in every story does not mean His presence or absence does not scream from every page. I would argue that this collection is valuably thought provoking, as well as sharpening to a rich faith. Artistically, this collection hits the mark of true literature that is expertly crafted and difficult to put downâ“whether from your hands or from your mind. Highly recommend.\*Digital ARC courtesy of the publisher\*

I have intended to read Joy Williams for some time and now, thanks to Tin House Books and NetGalley I've had a great introduction. These are most definitely not traditional stories of God's intercession with man as read in religious works. These are everyday experiences that reveal the human and seem to border on something other. At times, The Lord shows up personally to check in on humans, but not in a majestic way, more in a personal, often perplexed way given how humankind seems to be dealing with the world now a days. These stories vary in length from a couple of sentences to a couple of pages (at the most). Most are no longer than a long paragraph or two. Some are bitingly satiric. Some are achingly sad. Some require time for the words to sink in. A few left me completely befuddled. I consider such a mix a wonderful success. My brain and heart were challenged. If one is looking for traditional religious writing here, you will probably be disappointed. But if you are open to the religious experience that exists in all of life then this may well be for you. I just found a sentence from one of my status updates written while reading which I will include here: "The general theme of God can be taken in many ways, some quite traditional and literal, while others seem to be more related to the gods of life today." This was my view about 2/3rds through and seems a good summary of these short fictions. I do recommend it for those who enjoy this story form---which I am enjoying more and more. A copy of this book was provided by the publisher through NetGalley in return for an honest review.

These short-short-short stories are odd, cryptic, and wonderful. In few of the stories will you have the sense of a direct plot line re: God. These are not stories with a neat, easily understandable ending, they are more like zen koans. Suffice to say when I finished the book I immediately bought one of Joy Williams novels - her writing is addicting.

You want this book! You may not know it â“ but this book might change your life! See it as short

tales, or see it, as I do, short entertainments that are also meditations â “ meditations on how we lead our lives, how others lead theirs, and how we encounter the Mystery some call God. And these stories, short-shorties â “ are playful and delightful â “ they are like the first spring days after a long winter â “ when the air is fresh, the snowâ ™s almost a memory - the first spring flowers blossoming â “ and the airâ ™s full of birdsong. Will this book change your life? You never know â “ try it on for size â “ and you will find yourself returning to it, as we do all teaching tales, to wring out fresh meaning and fresh wonder!

Initially fooled by the authorâ ™s name â “ I thought this book was by singer songwriter, solo artist, and half of The Civil Wars, Joy Williams â “ I accepted the offer to read Ninety-Nine Stories of God. Donâ ™t take the book blurb too serious. Rather than focusing on the Supreme Being in 99 short stories, Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award finalist Joy Williams (1944) is indeed â œcapturing both the absurdity and the darkness of everyday life.â • Yes, God is waiting, acting, not showing up at man-made parties, talking and laughing in Williamsâ ™ fictional plots. Scenes bring the O.J. Simpson case, Kafka and Tolstoy back to life, and among others many down to earth humans, pets, and thoughts. Misunderstandings, attempts to apply etymology and hermeneutics, sometimes boring, more often bringing me to laugh and think again. What about the pig who saved a man from drowning? â œWould the pig have rescued the man if she had known that he and his companions had just enjoyed a picnic of ham sandwiches? The pigâ ™s owner replied that pigs are intelligent, more intelligent than dogs, but they are not omniscient.â • or â œThe Lord was asked if He believed in reincarnation. I do, He said. It explains so much. On your last Fourth of July festivities, I was invited to observe an annual hot-dog-eating contest, the Lord said, and it was the stupidest thing Iâ ™ve ever witnessed.â • In shorter than regular short fiction, some not more than a couple of sentences, bizarre and provoking thoughts, observations and situations are penned.

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