



Man in the Moon: Essays on Fathers and Fatherhood

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"Science claims it will one day be able to eliminate fathers from the equation by mating bone marrow with ovum. When that day comes, I imagine this book, along with a handful of other works (*King Lear*, *Fun Home*) will become even more necessary. Herein find the blueprints for the mystery, the maps for the uncharted, the keys to the archetype."

—Nick Flynn, author of *The Reenactments* and *Another Bullshit Night in Suck City*

"At this moment, I find myself at loose ends, lost in the various vacuums left by my father's dying and my sons' departures out into the voids. Yet this stunning constellation of essays centered me, became for me fine instruments of reckoning of where to stand in the ceaseless entropic dynamic of kin, of paternal keening. These waxing meditations demonstrate the inflationary universe, the heft and velocity of that big ol' nothing. They elegantly fill, with sober hope and the balm of joy, the terrifying, infinite spaces between those waning stars."

—Michael Martone, author of *Michael Martone* and *Four for a Quarter*

"What an unreachable mystery the father is, preoccupied, unknowable, pervasive. In these fascinating essays, a shared portrait emerges as writers articulate the perpetual puzzle of the father and, with grace and candor, explore what it means to not know him, to never know him. As one voice, these essays investigate the man—his inventories, his myths, his mere traces—who makes up our horizons, who forever shimmers there beyond our collective grasp."

—Susanna Sonnenberg, author of *Her Last Death* and *She Matters: A Life in Friendships*

Selected from the country's leading literary journals and publications—*Crazyhorse*, *Colorado Review*, *The Nervous Breakdown*, *Creative Nonfiction*, *Georgia Review*, *Gulf Coast*, *The Missouri Review*, *The Normal School*, and others—*Man in the Moon* brings together essays in which sons, daughters, and fathers explore the elusive nature of this intimate relationship and find unique ways to frame and understand it: through astronomy, arachnology, storytelling, map-reading, television, puzzles, DNA, and so on. In the collection's title essay, Bill Capossere considers the inextricable link between his love of astronomy and memories of his father: "The man in the moon is no stranger to me," he writes. "I have seen his face before, and it is my father's, and his father's, and my own." Other essays include Dinty Moore's "Son of Mr. Green Jeans: A Meditation on Missing Fathers," in which Moore lays out an alphabetic investigation of fathers from popular culture—Ward Cleaver, Jim Anderson, Ozzie Nelson—while ruminating on his own absent father and hesitation to become a father himself. In "Plot Variations," Robin Black attempts to understand, through the

lens of teaching fiction to creative writing students, her inability to attend her father's funeral. Deborah Thompson tries to reconcile her pride in her father's pioneering research in plastics and her concerns about their toxic environmental consequences in "When the Future Was Plastic." At turns painfully familiar, comic, and heartbreaking, the essays in this collection also deliver moments of seari



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