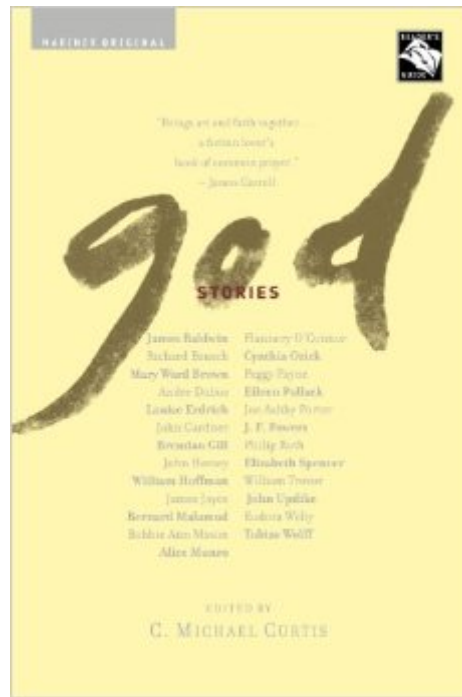


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# God: Stories



## Synopsis

In a fresh approach to an age-old discussion, an esteemed editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* collects twenty-five dazzling short stories by eminent writers about spiritual experiences of all sorts. With works by John Updike, Philip Roth, Louise Erdrich, James Joyce, Flannery O'Connor, James Baldwin, Alice Munro, and more, *God: Stories* offers insight, solace, and pleasure not only to the faithful but to seekers -- and to those who simply love fine stories. "Challenging the mind and exhilarating the soul . . . [this] rare and precious collection" (Susannah Heschel) explores the human dimensions of spirituality from the comic to the passionate, the skeptical to the mystical and beyond.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

My parish book group chose this for our gatherings and we are still reaping the benefits of this wonderful collection. We read one story per month and then come together for discussion. The stories touch our lives and are the foundation of fruitful and rich dialogue. As a mother of small children with limited time to myself, I particularly appreciate the opportunity to enjoy such wonderful gems of literature in small bites.

I know most of you out there are screaming, "But I want to read novels! The kind you can't put down, like *Shopaholic in Manhattan* and *The DaVinci Code*!" Well, chill it. Short stories are going to come back if I have to stand in Times Square with a sandwich board and a bullhorn. Would that upstage the Naked Cowboy? This volume includes such illustrious names as Flannery O'Conner

(here with one of her funniest), Alice Munro (good here, even though she sometimes bores me into a coma), and Andre Dubus (for all of you lazy types, he's the guy that wrote the story that In the Bedroom is adapted from). John Updike joins me in singing the praises of WASP sensibility with one of his consistently excellent stories, "Made in Heaven." Philip Roth shows up to add a little variety in "Defender of the Faith," an early story about a Jewish boy in Brooklyn. Everyone will like Louise Erdrich's offering, "Satan: Hijacker of a Planet," and not just because of the title. If you're feeling overwhelmed, I'd skip the works included by James Baldwin and J. F. Powers, which only weigh this book down. But along with these big names in the genre are John Hersey, who contributes what I consider to be one of my new favorites, "God's Typhoon." It takes place at a summer resort for expats living in China and centers around an evangelical English preacher, Dr. Wyman. In just those twelve pages, you've got inclement weather, boyhood pranks, a lush and exotic setting, and possible divine vengeance. Tell me that you got that out of the latest James Patterson and I'll buy you a midpriced lunch.

Curtis has two anthologies, one more recent than the other, intended to answer the objections that the first was too centered on the Judeo-Christian tradition(s). I can't recall as I write my review which was which (the other is called "Faith: Stories")--but together they make a good pair for anyone who wants to read and think about the relationship between the human and the divine. I also recommend supplementing them with a third anthology, *A Celestial Omnibus: Short Fiction on Faith*, which is more diverse still.

This is a collection of stories from well known authors. The editor of this collection is providing the reader the opportunity to determine how each author may be using the characters' to present scenarios of goodness/evil.

I have read this book as well as another book edited by Mr. Curtis. And I have recommended this book to others and used in a weekly book study at our church a couple of years ago. To me it proves that God provides truth in whatever context it is presented. Some Christians may write-off secular authors or musicians but I feel that all truth is God's truth. If we listen carefully we can learn from the words of a variety of people seeking spiritual truth.

God:Stories falls in the richest tradition of real literature--absorbing, entertaining, and never stuffy. Michael Curtis, with an exquisite eye and sensibility for excellent writing and for writing that touches

our humanity in ways we can ponder and use, has brought together a truly valuable collection, a keeper for personal pleasure and enrichment as well as for use with serious writing students. He has started us on a habit with *God:Stories* and *Faith:Stories* we hope he and his publisher will continue to feed.

I have used this book, as well as *Faith:Stories*, another excellent collection from Mike Curtis, fiction editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, in an adult Sunday school class on short fiction on the corollary subjects of Faith and Doubt. These two, plus the "Celestial Omnibus," are the best current resources available, as the writing is superior to some of the stories anthologized in the Lutheran Church Series.

The book, a collection of short stories by famous authors, is both interesting and thought provoking. I belong to a covenant group, sometimes called a small ministry, and we are using the book as our text. We analyze each story we read to find the message the author is writing about. Tremendously satisfying.

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