



Praying Drunk

By Kyle Minor

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Praying Drunk By Kyle Minor

"I finished this book with my heart pounding and grateful, my coffee cold and my smile wide and crying like a baby."—Daniel Handler

The characters in *Praying Drunk* speak in tongues, torture their classmates, fall in love, hunt for immortality, abandon their children, keep machetes beneath passenger seats, and collect porcelain figurines. A man crushes pills on the bathroom counter while his son watches from the hallway; missionaries clumsily navigate an uprising with barbed wire and broken glass; a boy disparages memorized scripture, facedown on the asphalt, as he fails to fend off his bully. From Kentucky to Florida to Haiti, these seemingly disparate lives are woven together within a series of nested repetitions, enacting the struggle to remain physically and spiritually alive throughout the untamable turbulence of their worlds. In a masterful blend of fiction, autobiography, and surrealism, Kyle Minor shows us that the space between fearlessness and terror is often very small. Long before *Praying Drunk* reaches its plaintive, pitch-perfect end, Minor establishes himself again and again as one of the most talented younger writers in America.

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Praying Drunk By Kyle Minor Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Minor's first book of short fiction, *In the Devil's Territory* (2008), introduced a talented writer with a penchant for experimental repetition and extraordinary vision, whose characters struggle to contain or divulge the dark secrets faith and family conceal. This well-honed second book consists of a series of linked narratives dealing again with questions of religion and kin, spanning Kentucky, Florida, and Haiti. The book deserves to be read sequentially, not because it's arranged in chronological order but because characters and conceits recur, eventually coalescing into heartrending closure. In one instance, Minor tells the story of a son's suicide from multiple perspectives, spinning off seemingly peripheral characters, only to take up alternate points of view in subsequent stories. Elsewhere, a rational young man questions his romantic interest's spiritual awakenings, which include speaking in tongues and dangerous visions. Minor writes with the descriptive clarity of Denis Johnson, the jigsaw-like structuring of Sherwood Anderson, and the Appalachian acuity of Jayne Anne Phillips. Certainly one to read and enjoy and to watch for in the future. -- Diego Báez

Review

"The stories [in *Praying Drunk*] span decades as they move from Kentucky to Haiti and points between, but they work in concert to slowly reveal the landscape of an emotionally desolate quasi-America sinking under the weight of its own faith. Minor writes beautifully about these ruined lives." - *The New York Times Book Review*

"Sublime." - *The Rumpus*

"Similar to a great magic trick, the 13 stories in Minor's (*In the Devil's Territory*) latest lure reader investment with strong visuals while simultaneously pulling the rug out from underfoot with clever, literary sleights-of-hand. Though not necessarily linked in the traditional sense, there is a sequential order to the collection--ideas, locations, incidents, and characters echo as the volume chugs forward--and the result is an often dazzling, emotional, funny, captivating puzzle." - *Publishers Weekly*

"Before the clock strikes midnight to close the book on 2013, we're going to make the prediction that 2014 will be the year when literary folk won't be able to stop talking about Kyle Minor's masterfully written collection of stories." - Flavorwire

STARRED REVIEW, *Kirkus Reviews*

"Reading a Kyle Minor story feels like watching a Coen Brothers film: you have no idea where you're being led, but you know it's going to be good." - *Los Angeles Review of Books*

"Kyle Minor wants you to know that *Praying Drunk* is not actually, or only, a collection. In the epigraph, he warns: "These stories are meant to be read in order. This is a book, not just a collection. DON'T SKIP AROUND." Minor is right to insist. The stories may span decades as they move from Kentucky to Haiti and points between, but they work in concert to slowly reveal the landscape of an emotionally desolate quasi-America sinking under the weight of its own faith. . . . Minor writes beautifully about these ruined lives." —*New York Times Book Review*

“An award-winning short fiction author offers twelve stories so ripe with realism as to suggest a roman à clef. . . . This brilliant collection unfolds around a fractured narrative of faith and friends and family, loved and lost.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*, Starred Review

“The collection’s masterpiece, the novella “In a Distant Country,” works in epistolary style through a wide array of correspondents. All are connected somehow to a troubled Baptist mission in Haiti, and their community portrait, thanks to Minor’s ventriloquism, achieves tragic stature. . . . [a] grim yet terrific collection.”

—*Boston Globe*

“Minor’s book is one of the most thought-provoking, intelligently designed story collections I’ve seen in some time, and the discussions he starts—about life, about art, about the boundaries and limitations of genre—are ones scholars and writers alike will be discussing for quite some time, and with good reason. Equally impressively, the narratives are engaging and the sentences strikingly arranged.”

—*Barnes & Noble Reviews*

“As a jealous and deeply insecure writer, I wish I didn’t have to report that these stories are enviably brilliant. But sadly, this is the fact of the matter. Kyle Minor has elevated the short story collection for me.”

—*LA Review of Books*

"Kyle Minor’s new collection, *Praying Drunk*, has already made its claim for being one of the year’s best books. The stories contained within it recount wrenching stories of families in turmoil, faith challenged, and nations in upheaval. Structurally inventive and equally adept at realism and the surreal, Minor’s new book is a stunning work of literature."

—*Vol. 1 Brooklyn*

"*Praying Drunk* gets the whole thing down: the cosmic muck and the local glory, the big questions and the tiny lives, the bullies and the saviors, the screaming at the sky and the lights by the side of the road late at night on a long drive. I finished this book with my heart pounding and grateful, my coffee cold and my smile wide and crying like a baby."

—Daniel Handler

"Watch *Praying Drunk's* lovely, lonely people wrestle with Minor's dark God and remember when you too tried to reason with Him and unravel His mysterious commands. These passionate tales, full of longing and daring and honesty, will disturb and inspire you."

—Deb Olin Unferth

"When the characters residing in Kyle Minor’s engrossing and lively *Praying Drunk* find a toehold on the good life, I hope that it’s autobiographical. When the characters find themselves enveloped in desperate situations, irreversible circumstances, and despair, I pray that it’s solely out of the writer’s imagination. These fine stories—up there with the best works of Padgett Powell, Donald Barthelme, and Robert Coover—never straddle a milquetoast fence: they’re extreme in humor, extreme in sorrowfulness, and 100% individually-wrapped masterpieces. I am haunted and mesmerized by this collection."

—George Singleton, author of *Stray Decorum*

About the Author

Kyle Minor is the winner of the 2012 *Iowa Review* Prize for Short Fiction, the Tara M. Kroger Prize for Short Fiction, and the author of *In Devil's Territory* (2008) and *Praying Drunk* (2014). He is also a three-

time honoree in the annual *Atlantic Monthly* writing contest, and was named one of Random House's Best New Voices of 2006. His work has appeared in *The New York Times Book Review*, *The Southern Review*, *The Gettysburg Review*, *The Iowa Review*, *Gulf Coast*, *Salon.com*, *TheAtlantic.com*, *Esquire.com*, *Best American Mystery Stories 2008*, *Best American Nonrequired Reading 2013*, *Twentysomething Essays by Twentysomething Writers*, and *Forty Stories: New Voices from Harper Perennial*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Donna Bohannon:

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Playing with family in the park, coming to see the ocean world or hanging out with buddies is something that usually you will have done when you have spare time, then why don't you try something that is really opposite from that. A single activity that makes you not feel tired but still relaxing, thrilling like on a roller coaster you are riding on and with additional info. Even you love *Praying Drunk*, it is possible to enjoy both. It is a great combination, right, you still want to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh, it can happen in its mind hangout guys. What? Still don't have it, oh, come on, it's referred to as reading friends.

Margaret Padua:

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