



## Thirteen Ways of Looking: Fiction

By Colum McCann

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**Thirteen Ways of Looking: Fiction** By Colum McCann

**NAMED ONE OF THE TEN BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY *CHICAGO TRIBUNE* AND ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY *The New York Times Book Review* • *NPR* • *Los Angeles Times* • *The Boston Globe* • *The Seattle Times* • *The Independent***

In such acclaimed novels as *Let the Great World Spin* and *TransAtlantic*, National Book Award–winning author Colum McCann has transfixed readers with his precision, tenderness, and authority. Now, in his first collection of short fiction in more than a decade, McCann charts the territory of chance, and the profound and intimate consequences of even our smallest moments.

*“As it was, it was like being set down in the best of poems, carried into a cold landscape, blindfolded, turned around, unblindfolded, forced, then, to invent new ways of seeing.”*

In the exuberant title novella, a retired judge reflects on his life’s work, unaware as he goes about his daily routines that this particular morning will be his last. In “Sh’khol,” a mother spending Christmas alone with her son confronts the unthinkable when he disappears while swimming off the coast near their home in Ireland. In “Treaty,” an elderly nun catches a snippet of a news report in which it is revealed that the man who once kidnapped and brutalized her is alive, masquerading as an agent of peace. And in “What Time Is It Now, Where You Are?” a writer constructs a story about a Marine in Afghanistan calling home on New Year’s Eve.

Deeply personal, subtly subversive, at times harrowing, and indeed funny, yet also full of comfort, *Thirteen Ways of Looking* is a striking achievement. With unsurpassed empathy for his characters and their inner lives, Colum McCann forges from their stories a profound tribute to our search for meaning and grace. The collection is a rumination on the power of storytelling in a world where language and memory can sometimes falter, but in the end do not fail us, and a contemplation of the healing power of literature.

### **Praise for *Thirteen Ways of Looking***

“Extraordinary . . . incandescent.”—*Chicago Tribune*

“The irreducible mystery of human experience ties this small collection together,

and in each of these stories McCann explores that theme in some strikingly effective ways. . . . [The first story] is as fascinating as it is poignant. . . . [The second] captures the mundane and mysterious aspects of shaping characters from the gray clay of words, placing them in realistic settings and breathing life into their lungs. . . . That he makes the story so emotionally compelling is a sign of his genius. . . . The most remarkable [piece] is *Sh'khol*. . . . Caught in the rushing currents of this drama, you know you're reading a little masterpiece."—*The Washington Post*

"McCann is a writer of power and subtlety and beauty. . . . The powerful title story loiters in the mind long after you've read it."—**Sarah Lyall**, *The New York Times*

"[McCann] unspools complex and unforgettable stories in this, his first collection in more than a decade."—*The Boston Globe*

"McCann is a passionate writer whose impulse is always toward a generous understanding of his diverse characters."—*The Wall Street Journal*

"Powerful, profound, and deeply empathetic, McCann's beautifully wrought writing in *Thirteen Ways of Looking* glides off the page."—*BuzzFeed*

"McCann weaves the magic that made *Let the Great World Spin* so acclaimed."—*The Huffington Post*

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### Thirteen Ways of Looking: Fiction By Colum McCann Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #119303 in Books
- Published on: 2015-10-13
- Released on: 2015-10-13
- Format: Deckle Edge
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x .90" w x 5.90" l, 1.07 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 256 pages

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### Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

**An Amazon Best Book of October 2015:** The great, enviable quality of Colum McCann’s books— the thing that wins him prizes (National Book Award for *Let the Great World Spin*), fellowships (a Guggenheim) and fans (both as a teacher, at Hunter College in New York where he mentored last year’s national book award winner Phil Klay, among others) -- is that they are both erudite and deeply, humanely, readable. You don’t have to know, for example, that the title of the collection and of the novella inside, comes from a Wallace Stevens poem; read straightforwardly, the title story is a brilliant evocation on its own, a sardonic and touching account of the last day in the life of an ailing New York judge, who reminisces passionately about his late wife and sees all too clearly the boor of a son they’ve created. And even though there’s a bit of a whodunit in this tale – Judge Mendelssohn dies mysteriously on the street outside the restaurant he frequents for lunch—the pleasure is as much in the language as in the plot. McCann can’t resist some refined word play (“Don’t put all your begs in one ask-it”) and the occasional, ultra-descriptive insult (“His wife is a pile-up of peroxide.) But there’s a lot of heart here, too, as well as in the other three stories in the collection. McCann says in his Author’s Notes that all four pieces were written in reaction to “an incident that occurred in New Haven, Connecticut” when the author was knocked unconscious by a stranger as he went to the aid of a woman in distress. Opining that, no matter what, “every word we write is autobiographical,” McCann has found a way to plumb, in fiction, the real life violence all around us and the way each of us copes, or not. – *Sara Nelson*

Review

“Extraordinary . . . incandescent.”—*Chicago Tribune*

“The irreducible mystery of human experience ties this small collection together, and in each of these stories [Colum] McCann explores that theme in some strikingly effective ways. . . . McCann has perfected a method of finely blending his own narration with his characters’ thoughts and dialogue. . . . [The first story] is as fascinating as it is poignant. . . . [The second] captures the mundane and mysterious aspects of shaping characters from the gray clay of words, placing them in realistic settings and breathing life into their lungs. . . . That he makes the story so emotionally compelling is a sign of his genius. . . . The most remarkable [piece] is *Sh’khol*. . . . Caught in the rushing currents of this drama, you know you’re reading a little masterpiece. . . . [It’s] only one of the treasures in this collection.”—*The Washington Post*

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“McCann is a passionate writer whose impulse is always toward a generous understanding of his diverse characters.”—*The Wall Street Journal*

“McCann’s characters in this new work—whether nuns or judges or writers—are mostly ordinary people encountering extraordinary situations often touched by loss. Powerful, profound, and deeply empathetic, McCann’s beautifully wrought writing in *Thirteen Ways of Looking* glides off the page.”—*BuzzFeed*

“In just three short stories and one novella, McCann weaves the magic that made *Let the Great World Spin* so acclaimed—especially in one brilliant short piece of metafiction in which the process of writing a story becomes interwoven with the story created.”—*The Huffington Post*

#### About the Author

**Colum McCann** is the internationally bestselling author of the novels *TransAtlantic*, *Let the Great World Spin*, *Zoli*, *Dancer*, *This Side of Brightness*, and *Songdogs*, as well as two critically acclaimed story collections. His fiction has been published in thirty-five languages. He has received many honors, including the National Book Award, the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award, a Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres award from the French government, and the Ireland Fund of Monaco Literary Award in Memory of Princess Grace. He has been named one of *Esquire*'s “Best and Brightest,” and his short film *Everything in This Country Must* was nominated for an Oscar in 2005. A contributor to *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Atlantic*, and *The Paris Review*, he teaches in the Hunter College MFA Creative Writing program. He lives in New York City with his wife and their three children, and he is the cofounder of the global nonprofit story exchange organization, Narrative 4.

#### Users Review

##### From reader reviews:

##### **Brenda Schweiger:**

The feeling that you get from *Thirteen Ways of Looking: Fiction* could be the more deep you looking the information that hide within the words the more you get enthusiastic about reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to understand but *Thirteen Ways of Looking: Fiction* giving you buzz feeling of reading. The author conveys their point in specific way that can be understood by simply anyone who read it because the author of this publication is well-known enough. This specific book also makes your personal vocabulary increase well. That makes it easy to understand then can go with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We advise you for having this *Thirteen Ways of Looking: Fiction* instantly.

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##### **Donald Worsley:**

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