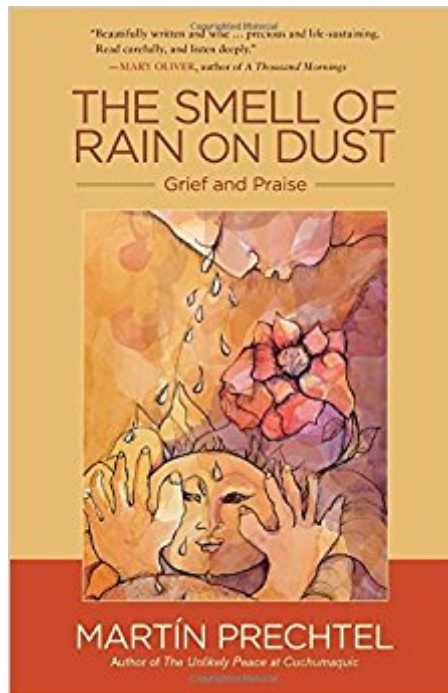




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# The Smell Of Rain On Dust: Grief And Praise



## Synopsis

Inspiring hope, solace, and courage in living through our losses, author MartÃn Prechtel, trained in the Tzutujil Maya shamanic tradition, shares profound insights on the relationship between grief and praise in our culture--how the inability that many of us have to grieve and weep properly for the dead is deeply linked with the inability to give praise for living. In modern society, grief is something that we usually experience in private, alone, and without the support of a community. Yet, as Prechtel says, "Grief expressed out loud for someone we have lost, or a country or home we have lost, is in itself the greatest praise we could ever give them. Grief is praise, because it is the natural way love honors what it misses." Prechtel explains that the unexpressed grief prevalent in our society today is the reason for many of the social, cultural, and individual maladies that we are currently experiencing. According to Prechtel, "When you have two centuries of people who have not properly grieved the things that they have lost, the grief shows up as ghosts that inhabit their grandchildren." These "ghosts," he says, can also manifest as disease in the form of tumors, which the Maya refer to as "solidified tears," or in the form of behavioral issues and depression. He goes on to show how this collective, unexpressed energy is the long-held grief of our ancestors manifesting itself, and the work that can be done to liberate this energy so we can heal from the trauma of loss, war, and suffering. At base, this "little book," as the author calls it, can be seen as a companion of encouragement, a little extra light for those deep and noble parts in all of us.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Martin Prechtel's book is beautifully written and wise. He offers stories that are precious and life-sustaining. Read carefully, and listen deeply." —Mary Oliver

"Here Martin Prechtel sends us an invitation to peace: to personal, village-level, and world peace. His indigenous wisdom gives us much-needed insights into the reverberating impact of not grieving our heart-rending losses. Most poignantly, he shows us the devastating inheritance of our ever more voracious wars and the misunderstood burden of ghosts that swirl around our modern warriors. Yet, instead of leaving us more despondent, every chapter holds out a new seed, breaking into new life. Martin coaxes us through funny and quirky turns of the ordinary and the miraculous to leave us inspired to wake up singing to the beauty of our rising sun and live in praise of this complex and gracious world." —Inge Hindel, MD/PhD, family and integrated medicine doctor at Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center, Oregon

"Martin Prechtel's genius takes many forms: painting, music, a continuously evolving learning community, and thank God, books like this one. I get so excited reading it, I cannot stay in one place. I sit reading on my porch, then back to my living room to make a fire and watch Martin's gorgeously alive prose burn inside me. His ideas and language are so enlivening, my impulse is to quote great sections of it. I'll just touch on a few of his brilliant insights around how animals help us to grieve, and to make our way out of grief into the beauty of praising. As he says, animals help us grieve our loss of naturalness. And we have mostly forgotten the very old worldwide tribal custom of having a 'grief relative' from the wild living together with us in our houses. Caring for animals is a sacred responsibility. To truly grieve and to weep deeply is something the animals really do help us with. And O they help us praise too, to accomplish that most marvelous art of turning the grief into praising. Martin tells us, 'Let the world jump up and live again,' and he makes that happen with his delicious sentences. Read this necessary, very beautiful book, and then read it again." —Coleman Barks, author of *Rumi: Soul Fury*

"Many veterans are now banding into 'warrior societies' but do not know which direction to go. In my work, I see on a daily basis many new patients (veterans) coming in for help: some with traumatic brain injury (TBI), substance abuse (mainly alcohol), post-traumatic disorders, and the all-too-frequent 'suicide attempt' with which a new generation of warriors kick off the repressed memories of Vietnam-era warriors remembering what was suppressed for so many years, their minds desperately making an attempt to resolve an ungrieved, ghost-ridden past. *The Smell of Rain on Dust* beautifully addresses the possibility of a society of warriors so changed by having killed that they become a society of healers to heal those wounded in war, both old and new." —John Ishmael, RN BSN,

nurse physician liaison and discharge planner at Salt Lake City Veterans Hospital

“Alchemy, by definition, metabolizes and transmutes. A reading of *The Smell of Rain on Dust* is alchemical. If the shredding of the glorious web of life has you sinking into a depth of despair, read this book; your grief can metabolize and transmute such wrongness. Deep and delightful, *The Smell of Rain on Dust* is also instructive. It will charm you into wanting to live life more fully, to walk in beauty even amongst modernity’s polarized spiritual failures.”

•Randy Hayes, director of Foundation Earth and founder of Rainforest Action Network

“Once again, Martin Prechtel is up to his old tricks. Making medicine out of poison. *The Smell of Rain on Dust* takes grief, pain, strife, and other elements of a society in distress and concocts a potion that actually heals those who have ears to listen. In a world that needs to grieve its wrongdoings but has lost its ability or forgotten its ancient wisdom to do so, Mr. Prechtel has been selected as a spokesman to reunite modern man with ancient wisdom. Not an enviable position!”

•H. Bruce Coslor, Vietnam veteran, Nebraska cattle rancher, songwriter, musician, and grandfather

“I love *Martin Prechtel’s* book. It was amazing reading it aloud to the ocean. At one point I moved up the coast assuming the listening birds, seals, and whales would stay, but they moved with me. The waves listened and the wind. Read this magical book as it takes you into the courtyard of the heart.”

•M. Bacon, international award-winning documentary film director and producer

“This wonderful book *The Smell of Rain on Dust* not only addresses this culture’s lack of grief but it discusses in poignant ways how our inability to grieve has created many of our culture’s delirious, fast paced, toxic, constant state-of-emergency symptoms where depression, addiction, and mediocrity reign. As a mother, daughter, teacher, and farmer I found this book to stir up a deep prayer, that as a people we might, one day, through being with the depths of our grief, find so much love and deliciousness in being alive that we praise this life so genuinely, nothing is left unloved.”

•Melanie MacKinnon, teacher, farmer, and owner of Frog Belly Farms, Colorado

“I held my personal grief for decades until, with the help of the author, I ceremonially metabolized my grief into a thing of beauty. Like a magic genie, I popped out of the bottle I had crawled into with a renewed love of life. In *The Smell of Rain on Dust: Grief and Praise*, Prechtel leads the reader down this same trail of animals and life in the womb while revealing that grief is the sister of praise. Like Prechtel’s other books, this astonishing book draws me back to reexamine the beauty of a life lived well.”

•Wick Fisher, retired postmaster, Vietnam veteran, and orator at soldier funerals

“Brilliant gems of storytelling illuminate teachings of inspiration and hope in this new work by Martin Prechtel, a work to which he brings a traditional indigenous understanding of how to

deal with loss. •Michael Harner, author of Cave and Cosmos and founder of the Foundation for Shamanic Studies

A leading thinker, writer and teacher in the search for the indigenous soul in all people, Martín Prechtel is a dedicated student of eloquence, history, language and an ongoing fresh approach. In his native New Mexico Martín teaches at his international school Bolad's Kitchen: a hands-on historical and spiritual immersion into language, music, ritual, farming, cooking, smithing, natural colors, architecture, animal raising, clothing, tools, story, grief, and humor to help people from many lands, cultures, and backgrounds to remember and retain the majesty of their diverse origins while cultivating the flowering of integral culture in the present to grow a time of hope beyond our own.

This is a powerful book about grief being a way to praise the person or think we have lost. It is also about what happens when we don't grieve properly. It is especially powerful about what happens when we don't grieve war, including grieving for those we killed or maimed by our actions. HIGHLY recommended. Doug Renick

This is the third time I've purchased this book because I keep giving it away as there are so many people suffering alone with their grief, often including myself. I am completely enamored and fed by the sustenance of the beautiful words that describe this utterly vital and forgotten facet of living life.

This is an important book, for everyone. Martín Prechtel is not only an important thinker, he is a profound guide for the soul. His perspectives fundamentally changed - for the better - my relationship with grief. Loss and grief are part of each of our lives - and so this should be part of everyone's library.

This book is a refreshing and welcome breath of air inside a culture that is so ashamed of expressing emotion. Each page is to be savored. A beautifully written piece of heartfelt poetry; it will become a favorite gift for friends that are silently trying to grieve their losses.

Writing is beautiful and inspirational

good book about grieving every loss in life...

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