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# Falling Room (American Lives)



## Synopsis

Coming of age poor in spirit in the America of plenty is an old story that is yet endlessly new, beginning afresh every time a confused teenager tries to make sense of his privileged place in the world. Eli Hastings got a head start on this when his idealistic, permissive parents divorced, and he sought answers by sneaking out at night to play chicken with freight trains, write graffiti, and get high with friends. This youthful rebellion included an arrest and weekend in jail for drug possession and later jail for an act of civil disobedience during the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle. Hastings recounts how a privileged, white, fiercely leftist American male tries to make sense of himself in relation to the contrary people and situations he finds in books and his travels to Cuba and Central America. *Falling Room* is the tale of how one man matures through the sometimes violent blessing of social change and finds himself--and a sense of purpose--through the loss of innocence and naiveté. Reflecting on the firsthand experience of hip-hop and substance abuse, of the fracturing of family, the loss of his father, and of the imperialism of the United States, Hastings's story offers a new and moving look at how families, nations, and individuals survive and heal.

## Book Information

Series: American Lives

Paperback: 180 pages

Publisher: Bison Books (September 1, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0803273649

ISBN-13: 978-0803273641

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.4 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #4,206,303 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #93 in [Books > Travel > Central America > Nicaragua](#) #192 in [Books > Travel > Central America > Panama](#) #194 in [Books > Travel > United States > Washington > Seattle](#)

## Customer Reviews

"Falling Room is a wild romp of memoir, politics, and experimentation. This is a book about the origin of protest--about finding, challenging, understanding, and ultimately forgiving the father and the fatherland. It's full of tremendous talent, beauty, and energy."--Sarah Messer, author of *Bandit*

Letters and Red House "Time and again I came across passages that just floored me--images that were so vivid and right that they catapulted me right to the scene of the story, turns of phrases that captured some elemental truth about the way things are, the way people think and behave."--Philip Gerard, author of Cape Fear and Creative Nonfiction: Researching and Crafting Stories of Real Life "In Falling Room, Eli Hastings moves beyond mere anger to write with a passion that fuses pain and tenderness, anger and sympathy. I emerged out the other side of this immensely readable book bruised but full of wild hope."--Sebastian Matthews, author of In My Father's Footsteps "Falling Room is musical. It is worldly. It is intimate and concerned. Again and again I was impressed by the great democracy and tenderness in these pages, by these essays' remodeling of the urban and the pastoral, by their revelation of landscapes disparate and glaring. I finished feeling I'd been party to a mad and jubilant trip. A writer like Eli Hastings gives me hope in many things."--Brad Land, author of Goat: A Memoir

Eli Hastings is a Seattle native who now lives in Barcelona, Spain. He received an mfa in creative nonfiction from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and has published in numerous literary journals. He has worked in food service and retail sales, as a creative writing teacher and a manual laborer, as a Get-Out-the-Vote coordinator and a health care and utilities campaign coordinator.

A well written memoir that helped me understand the highs and lows of a very conscious young man as he comes to grips with his own caring, creative being and the world around him.

Fine.

A great read! I highly recommend it.

Hastings digs deeply into the sometimes funny, sometimes tragic, often poignant anecdotes of his own young life to bring us this fantastic collection of related short pieces. For those of us who came of age in the 90's, this book captures the essence of that experience and weaves it in the fabric of a narrative that is timeless and accessible regardless of your generation. His prose is original, and well crafted, sometimes leaping off the page and forcing you to pay attention, not just to the content, but the form as well. Simply put, you should read this book.

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