

let the great world spin colum mccann

Let the Great World Spin: Exploring Colum McCann's Masterpiece

let the great world spin colum mccann is more than just a novel title; it is an invitation into a richly woven tapestry of interconnected lives set against the vibrant backdrop of 1970s New York City. Colum McCann's 2009 novel has captivated readers worldwide, praised for its lyrical prose and profound exploration of humanity's resilience, tragedy, and hope. If you're curious about what makes this book a literary treasure, you've come to the right place. Let's dive into the layers that make "Let the Great World Spin" a standout work in contemporary literature.

Understanding the Essence of Let the Great World Spin by Colum McCann

At its core, "Let the Great World Spin" is a novel about connection—how disparate lives intersect in unexpected ways. The story is anchored by Philippe Petit's real-life tightrope walk between the Twin Towers in 1974, an event that symbolizes daring, balance, and the fragile threads that hold life together. McCann uses this moment as a metaphorical axis around which his characters' stories revolve.

The Narrative Structure and Multiple Perspectives

One of the most striking features of McCann's novel is its narrative style. Instead of following a single protagonist, the book presents multiple viewpoints, each chapter peeling back layers of New York's social fabric. From artists and junkies to mothers and priests, every character adds a unique voice to the chorus portraying the city's complexities.

This mosaic approach allows readers to see how personal tragedies and triumphs ripple outward, influencing others in subtle and profound ways. It's a storytelling technique that requires careful attention but ultimately rewards with a richer, more immersive experience.

Thematic Depth: What Let the Great World Spin Reveals About Humanity

Colum McCann's novel doesn't just recount events; it probes deep philosophical questions about life, loss, and redemption. Here are some central themes that emerge throughout the book:

1. The Interconnectedness of Lives

Each character's story seems isolated at first, but McCann skillfully reveals the threads linking them—whether through shared spaces, mutual acquaintances, or emotional echoes. This theme resonates deeply, suggesting that, despite our differences, human experiences are intertwined.

2. The Resilience in the Face of Tragedy

Set during a turbulent time in New York City's history, the novel captures the struggles of individuals confronting grief, addiction, and social inequality. Yet, amidst this darkness, moments of grace and courage shine through, reminding readers of the enduring human spirit.

3. The Power of Art and Expression

Given that one of the central figures is an artist and that the tightrope walk itself is a form of artistic expression, McCann explores how art offers meaning and balance in chaotic times. It acts as a bridge between despair and hope, chaos and order.

Colum McCann's Writing Style and Literary Techniques

What makes "Let the Great World Spin" stand out in modern literature is McCann's lyrical and evocative prose. His writing often reads like poetry, with vivid imagery and rhythmic sentences that pull readers into the sensory experience of the city and its inhabitants.

Use of Symbolism and Metaphor

The tightrope walk is not only a literal event but a powerful symbol for balance and risk in life. McCann uses this metaphor to explore themes of precariousness and courage. Other symbols, such as the Twin Towers themselves, serve as monuments to ambition, destruction, and memory.

Non-linear Storytelling

McCann doesn't stick to chronological order, instead weaving flashbacks and shifting perspectives to build a complex narrative mosaic. This style mirrors

the fragmented, multifaceted nature of urban life and human memory.

Why Let the Great World Spin Resonates Today

Despite being rooted in the 1970s, the novel's themes remain timeless and relevant. Readers today find in it reflections of their own experiences with adversity, connection, and hope. The story encourages empathy, inviting us to consider lives vastly different from our own but linked by universal emotions.

Impact on Readers and Critical Acclaim

Since its publication, "Let the Great World Spin" has garnered numerous awards, including the National Book Award for Fiction. Critics praise McCann's ability to craft a narrative that is both intimate and epic, bridging personal stories with historical events.

Lessons for Writers and Readers

For aspiring writers, McCann's novel is a masterclass in blending historical fact with fiction, using multiple perspectives effectively, and creating rich, believable characters. For readers, it offers a reminder of the power of storytelling to illuminate the human condition.

Exploring the Characters: The Heartbeat of Let the Great World Spin

The novel's characters are diverse and complex, each representing different facets of New York society.

- **Corrigan:** A Jesuit priest grappling with faith and loss, whose compassion brings healing to broken lives.
- **Claire:** A mother struggling to understand her son's tragic death in Vietnam, embodying grief and resilience.
- **Jazzlyn:** A prostitute and single mother who navigates the city's underbelly with strength and vulnerability.
- **J. J. Doyle:** An artist inspired by Petit's daring act, showing how art can transform perception.

Each character adds depth to the narrative, illustrating how personal stories intersect within the sprawling urban landscape.

The Role of Philippe Petit's Tightrope Walk

Petit's daring high-wire walk between the Twin Towers serves as a unifying thread. It symbolizes hope, risk, and the human desire to push boundaries. This event also acts as a moment of shared wonder amidst the characters' struggles, offering a metaphor for balance amid chaos.

Tips for Reading and Appreciating *Let the Great World Spin*

Given the novel's complex structure and rich thematic content, here are some tips to enhance your reading experience:

1. **Take your time:** Don't rush; savor McCann's poetic language and layered storytelling.
2. **Pay attention to perspective shifts:** Notice how each character's viewpoint adds nuance to the central narrative.
3. **Reflect on the symbolism:** Consider how the tightrope walk and other motifs relate to the characters' journeys.
4. **Research historical context:** Understanding 1970s New York and the Twin Towers' significance can deepen your appreciation.
5. **Discuss with others:** Sharing insights can reveal new interpretations and emotional resonances.

Engaging with the novel actively can transform reading into an enriching experience.

Let the Great World Spin in the Broader Context of Colum McCann's Work

Colum McCann is known for his ability to capture the human spirit in times of turmoil. His works often explore themes of connection across borders and cultures, focusing on moments where individual lives intersect with larger

historical events.

"Let the Great World Spin" is often considered McCann's breakthrough novel, showcasing his signature style of intertwining fact and fiction. It set the tone for his later works, which continue to delve into global stories with empathy and poetic insight.

The Novel's Place in Contemporary Literature

In the landscape of 21st-century fiction, McCann's novel stands out for its ambitious narrative scope and emotional depth. It resonates with readers seeking stories that reflect the complexities of modern life, combining historical detail with intimate character portraits.

The book's success also highlights the enduring appeal of stories that explore urban life, social justice, and the search for meaning in a fractured world.

Whether you're a longtime fan of Colum McCann or a newcomer curious about "Let the Great World Spin," this novel offers a profound glimpse into the human experience. Its evocative storytelling, memorable characters, and poignant themes continue to inspire and move readers around the globe, a testament to the enduring power of literature to connect us all.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the central theme of Colum McCann's 'Let the Great World Spin'?

The central theme of 'Let the Great World Spin' is the interconnectedness of human lives and the resilience of the human spirit amidst tragedy and hardship.

How does Colum McCann structure the narrative in 'Let the Great World Spin'?

Colum McCann uses multiple perspectives and interwoven stories to structure the narrative, providing a multifaceted view of New York City in the 1970s around Philippe Petit's tightrope walk.

Who are some of the main characters in 'Let the

Great World Spin' and what roles do they play?

Key characters include Corrigan, a monk who cares for marginalized people; Claire, a wealthy woman dealing with loss; and Jazzlyn, a young prostitute, each representing different facets of society.

What historical event serves as a backdrop in 'Let the Great World Spin'?

Philippe Petit's 1974 tightrope walk between the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center serves as a pivotal historical backdrop in the novel.

How does 'Let the Great World Spin' explore social issues?

The novel explores social issues such as poverty, addiction, racism, and the struggles of the marginalized in 1970s New York, highlighting the contrasts between different social classes.

What literary awards has 'Let the Great World Spin' received?

'Let the Great World Spin' won the 2009 National Book Award for Fiction and was widely praised for its innovative storytelling and emotional depth.

In what ways does Colum McCann use symbolism in 'Let the Great World Spin'?

The tightrope walk symbolizes balance, risk, and the interconnectedness of life, while the city itself acts as a living entity reflecting the characters' struggles and hopes.

How does 'Let the Great World Spin' portray New York City?

The novel portrays New York City as a vibrant, complex, and sometimes harsh environment, capturing its diversity and the stark contrasts between wealth and poverty.

What is the significance of the title 'Let the Great World Spin'?

The title reflects the idea of life continuing despite chaos and tragedy, emphasizing acceptance, endurance, and the ongoing movement of the world and human experience.

Additional Resources

Let the Great World Spin: An In-Depth Exploration of Colum McCann's Masterpiece

let the great world spin colum mccann is more than just a novel title; it is a profound literary work that has captivated readers and critics alike since its publication in 2009. Colum McCann's narrative intricately weaves together multiple characters and storylines set against the backdrop of 1970s New York City, centered around Philippe Petit's daring high-wire walk between the Twin Towers. This novel is a vivid exploration of human connection, tragedy, and hope, making it a significant contribution to contemporary literature.

Contextualizing Let the Great World Spin within McCann's Oeuvre

Colum McCann, an Irish writer known for his lyrical prose and empathetic storytelling, crafted *Let the Great World Spin* as a mosaic of intersecting lives. Unlike traditional linear narratives, the book employs a multi-perspective approach, allowing readers to delve into the lives of characters from diverse backgrounds—ranging from an artist grappling with grief to a pair of sisters confronting addiction. This stylistic choice exemplifies McCann's thematic focus on interconnectedness and the human condition.

The novel stands out in McCann's body of work by situating itself in a very specific time and place, namely New York City in the 1970s, a period marked by social unrest, economic challenges, and cultural shifts. Through this setting, McCann captures the essence of a city struggling yet pulsating with life, which parallels the precariousness and exhilaration of Philippe Petit's tightrope walk.

Exploring the Narrative Structure and Thematic Depth

Let the Great World Spin's narrative structure is complex yet meticulously crafted. The book employs shifting viewpoints, each chapter focusing on a different character, providing layers of perspective that enrich the reader's understanding of the event's impact. This approach allows for a mosaic narrative that reflects the fragmented yet interconnected nature of urban life.

The Central Event: Philippe Petit's Twin Towers Walk

Philippe Petit's high-wire act serves as the novel's symbolic and literal fulcrum. The event itself is real, a historical feat of daring and artistry, but McCann elevates it to a metaphor for balance amidst chaos. The tightrope walk represents human aspiration and the precariousness of existence, themes that resonate throughout the characters' stories.

Thematic Intersections

The novel explores several interrelated themes:

- **Connection and Isolation:** Characters are simultaneously isolated in their personal struggles yet connected through shared experiences and the city's atmosphere.
- **Grief and Redemption:** Many characters wrestle with loss and seek redemption, underscoring the novel's emotional resonance.
- **Social Inequality:** McCann does not shy away from portraying the stark contrasts of wealth and poverty in New York, providing a nuanced social commentary.
- **Art and Beauty:** Through Petit's walk and the lives of artists and writers, the novel meditates on the transformative power of art.

Characterization and Voices

A critical strength of *Let the Great World Spin* by Colum McCann lies in its rich character development. Each voice is distinct, and McCann's empathetic prose breathes life into characters who might otherwise be marginalized or overlooked. The inclusion of diverse perspectives—from a judge to a junkie—provides a panoramic view of humanity.

Notable Characters

1. **Corrigan:** A streetwise ex-con whose story reflects themes of redemption and resilience.
2. **Claire and Tillie:** Sisters who embody complicated familial bonds and struggles with addiction.
3. **Jazzlyn:** A mother whose grief over her son's death propels her

narrative.

4. **Philippe Petit:** Though less frequently the narrative focus, his presence is a connective thread symbolizing hope and daring.

These characters' narratives intertwine subtly, demonstrating how individual lives overlap and impact one another, often unbeknownst to the individuals themselves.

Literary Style and Prose

McCann's prose in *Let the Great World Spin* is characterized by its lyrical quality and vivid imagery. The language often mirrors the tension and fluidity of Petit's high-wire walk, balancing moments of poetic beauty with gritty realism. This stylistic duality reinforces the novel's themes of balance and contrast.

Furthermore, McCann's use of sensory detail immerses readers fully into the 1970s New York setting, from the noise of the city streets to the intimate spaces of his characters' lives. His narrative pacing varies, at times meditative, at others brisk, reflecting the emotional tempo of the story.

Critical Reception and Impact

Upon its release, *Let the Great World Spin* garnered widespread critical acclaim, winning the 2009 National Book Award for Fiction. Critics praised the novel for its ambitious structure, emotional depth, and masterful storytelling. The book's success elevated McCann's international reputation and contributed to renewed interest in narratives centered on urban life and historical events told through multiple perspectives.

Some critiques have pointed to the novel's sprawling cast and complex structure as potentially challenging for readers accustomed to more straightforward narratives. However, for many, these very qualities are what make the book a rewarding literary experience.

Comparative Insights

In comparison to other multi-narrative novels such as Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad* or David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*, McCann's work emphasizes the interplay between personal and historical moments with a palpable sense of place. Where Egan's novel focuses heavily on time and technology, and Mitchell's on reincarnation and cosmology, McCann roots his

narrative in the tangible, gritty reality of New York City, anchored by a singular, breathtaking event.

Relevance to Contemporary Readers

Let the Great World Spin remains relevant for modern audiences due to its exploration of timeless themes—connection, loss, and the search for meaning amid chaos. In an era marked by social fragmentation and uncertainty, McCann's depiction of intertwined lives offers a literary reflection on empathy and the human spirit's resilience.

Moreover, the novel's historical context provides a lens through which to understand urban dynamics and social issues that persist today, such as inequality, addiction, and the power of art to inspire and heal.

Adaptations and Cultural Influence

The novel has inspired theatrical adaptations and academic discussions, underscoring its cultural impact. Its vivid portrayal of a moment in history combined with universal themes makes it a popular subject for study in literature courses focusing on contemporary American fiction.

In examining let the great world spin colum mccann, it becomes clear that this novel is a multifaceted work that defies simple categorization. It is at once a historical novel, a social critique, and a poetic meditation on human connection. Through its innovative narrative and evocative prose, McCann invites readers to contemplate the precariousness of life balanced on a wire, much like Philippe Petit's iconic walk—an enduring symbol of courage, artistry, and hope.

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let the great world spin colum mccann: Let the Great World Spin Colum McCann, 2009-11-30 NATIONAL BOOK AWARD WINNER • Colum McCann's beloved novel inspired by Philippe Petit's daring high-wire stunt, which is also depicted in the film *The Walk* starring Joseph Gordon-Levitt In the dawning light of a late-summer morning, the people of lower Manhattan stand hushed, staring up in disbelief at the Twin Towers. It is August 1974, and a mysterious tightrope

walker is running, dancing, leaping between the towers, suspended a quarter mile above the ground. In the streets below, a slew of ordinary lives become extraordinary in bestselling novelist Colum McCann's stunningly intricate portrait of a city and its people. *Let the Great World Spin* is the critically acclaimed author's most ambitious novel yet: a dazzlingly rich vision of the pain, loveliness, mystery, and promise of New York City in the 1970s. Corrigan, a radical young Irish monk, struggles with his own demons as he lives among the prostitutes in the middle of the burning Bronx. A group of mothers gather in a Park Avenue apartment to mourn their sons who died in Vietnam, only to discover just how much divides them even in grief. A young artist finds herself at the scene of a hit-and-run that sends her own life careening sideways. Tillie, a thirty-eight-year-old grandmother, turns tricks alongside her teenage daughter, determined not only to take care of her family but to prove her own worth. Elegantly weaving together these and other seemingly disparate lives, McCann's powerful allegory comes alive in the unforgettable voices of the city's people, unexpectedly drawn together by hope, beauty, and the "artistic crime of the century." A sweeping and radical social novel, *Let the Great World Spin* captures the spirit of America in a time of transition, extraordinary promise, and, in hindsight, heartbreaking innocence. Hailed as a "fiercely original talent" (San Francisco Chronicle), award-winning novelist McCann has delivered a triumphantly American masterpiece that awakens in us a sense of what the novel can achieve, confront, and even heal. Praise for *Let the Great World Spin* "This is a gorgeous book, multilayered and deeply felt, and it's a damned lot of fun to read, too. Leave it to an Irishman to write one of the greatest-ever novels about New York. There's so much passion and humor and pure life force on every page of *Let the Great World Spin* that you'll find yourself giddy, dizzy, overwhelmed."—Dave Eggers "Stunning . . . [an] elegiac glimpse of hope . . . It's a novel rooted firmly in time and place. It vividly captures New York at its worst and best. But it transcends all that. In the end, it's a novel about families—the ones we're born into and the ones we make for ourselves."—USA Today "The first great 9/11 novel . . . We are all dancing on the wire of history, and even on solid ground we breathe the thinnest of air."—Esquire "Mesmerizing . . . a Joycean look at the lives of New Yorkers changed by a single act on a single day . . . Colum McCann's marvelously rich novel . . . weaves a portrait of a city and a moment, dizzyingly satisfying to read and difficult to put down."—The Seattle Times "Vibrantly whole . . . With a series of spare, gorgeously wrought vignettes, Colum McCann brings 1970s New York to life. . . . And as always, McCann's heart-stoppingly simple descriptions wow."—Entertainment Weekly "An act of pure bravado, dizzying proof that to keep your balance you need to know how to fall."—O: The Oprah Magazine

let the great world spin colum mccann: Let the Great World Spin Colum McCann, 2009-06-23 NATIONAL BOOK AWARD WINNER • Colum McCann's beloved novel inspired by Philippe Petit's daring high-wire stunt, which is also depicted in the film *The Walk* starring Joseph Gordon-Levitt In the dawning light of a late-summer morning, the people of lower Manhattan stand hushed, staring up in disbelief at the Twin Towers. It is August 1974, and a mysterious tightrope walker is running, dancing, leaping between the towers, suspended a quarter mile above the ground. In the streets below, a slew of ordinary lives become extraordinary in bestselling novelist Colum McCann's stunningly intricate portrait of a city and its people. *Let the Great World Spin* is the critically acclaimed author's most ambitious novel yet: a dazzlingly rich vision of the pain, loveliness, mystery, and promise of New York City in the 1970s. Corrigan, a radical young Irish monk, struggles with his own demons as he lives among the prostitutes in the middle of the burning Bronx. A group of mothers gather in a Park Avenue apartment to mourn their sons who died in Vietnam, only to discover just how much divides them even in grief. A young artist finds herself at the scene of a hit-and-run that sends her own life careening sideways. Tillie, a thirty-eight-year-old grandmother, turns tricks alongside her teenage daughter, determined not only to take care of her family but to prove her own worth. Elegantly weaving together these and other seemingly disparate lives, McCann's powerful allegory comes alive in the unforgettable voices of the city's people, unexpectedly drawn together by hope, beauty, and the "artistic crime of the century." A sweeping and radical social novel, *Let the Great World Spin* captures the spirit of America in a time of

transition, extraordinary promise, and, in hindsight, heartbreaking innocence. Hailed as a “fiercely original talent” (San Francisco Chronicle), award-winning novelist McCann has delivered a triumphantly American masterpiece that awakens in us a sense of what the novel can achieve, confront, and even heal. BONUS: This edition includes an excerpt from Colum McCann’s TransAtlantic. “This is a gorgeous book, multilayered and deeply felt, and it’s a damned lot of fun to read, too. Leave it to an Irishman to write one of the greatest-ever novels about New York. There’s so much passion and humor and pure life force on every page of *Let the Great World Spin* that you’ll find yourself giddy, dizzy, overwhelmed.”—Dave Eggers “Stunning . . . [an] elegiac glimpse of hope . . . It’s a novel rooted firmly in time and place. It vividly captures New York at its worst and best. But it transcends all that. In the end, it’s a novel about families—the ones we’re born into and the ones we make for ourselves.”—USA Today

let the great world spin colum mccann: *Let the Great World Spin* Colum McCann, 2009 New York, August 1974. A man is walking the sky. The city stands still in awe. Between the newly built Twin Towers the man is striding, twirling and showboating his way through the air. One hundred and ten stories below him, the lives of eight strangers spin towards each other... Corrigan, a radical, passionate Irish monk working in the Bronx with a clutch of prostitutes; Claire, a delicate Upper East Side housewife reeling from the death of her son in Vietnam; her husband Solomon, a cynical judge turning over petty criminals in a downtown court; Lara, a young artist struggling with a spiralling drug addiction and a doomed marriage; Fernando, a thirteen-year-old photographer chasing underground graffiti; Gloria, solid and proud despite decades of hardship; Tillie, a courageous hooker who used to dream of a better life; and Jazzlyn, her beautiful, reckless daughter raised on promises that reach beyond the high-rises of New York. Set against a time of sweeping political and social change, from the backlash against the Vietnam War and the lingering spectre of the oil crisis to the beginnings of the Internet - a time that hauntingly mirrors the present time - these disparate lives will collide in the shadow of one reckless and beautiful act, and be transformed for ever. Weaving together themes of love, loss, belonging, duty and human striving, *Let the Great World Spin* celebrates the effervescent spirit of an age and the small beauties of everyday life. At once intimate and magnificent, elegant and astonishing, it is a lyrical masterpiece from a storyteller who continues to use the wide world as his canvas.

let the great world spin colum mccann: *Let the Great World Spin by Colum McCann | Summary & Study Guide* ,

let the great world spin colum mccann: Adult Book Club Kit for Colum McCann's *Let the Great World Spin* , 2013

let the great world spin colum mccann: Study Guide: *Let the Great World Spin* by Colum McCann (SuperSummary) SuperSummary, 2019-03-03 SuperSummary, a modern alternative to SparkNotes and CliffsNotes, offers high-quality study guides for challenging works of literature. This 37-page guide for *Let the Great World Spin* by Colum McCann includes detailed chapter summaries and analysis covering 10 chapters, as well as several more in-depth sections of expert-written literary analysis. Featured content includes commentary on major characters, 25 important quotes, essay topics, and key themes like Surviving Loss and Coping with Grief and Inner Reality vs. Outer Reality/Appearances.

let the great world spin colum mccann: *Understanding Colum McCann* John Cusatis, 2012-08-24 The first critical approach to the literary career of the 2009 National Book Award winner *Understanding Colum McCann* chronicles the Irish-born writer's journey to literary celebrity from his days as a teenage sportswriter for the Irish Press in the 1970s, through the publication of his award-winning first story, *Tresses*, in 1990, to his winning the 2009 National Book Award in fiction for the international bestseller *Let the Great World Spin*. In this first critical study of McCann's body of work, John Cusatis provides an introduction to McCann's life and career; an overview of his major themes, style, and influences; and close readings of his two short story collections and five novels. Cusatis traces McCann's redefinition of the Irish novel, exploring the author's propensity for transcending aesthetic, cultural, ethnic, geographical, and social boundaries in his ascent from the

status of Irish novelist to international novelist. In the process, this study illuminates the various incarnations of McCann's perennial subject: exile, both geographical and emotional. Cusatis also delineates how the influences of McCann's Irish upbringing, penchant for international travel, and exhaustive and eclectic reading of literature manifest themselves in his fiction. Close attention is given to McCann's stylistic trademarks, such as his poetic voice, use of Christian symbolism, Irish and classical mythology, intertextuality, multiple viewpoints, nonlinear plot structure, and the merger of what McCann deems factual truth and textual truth. Understanding Colum McCann makes use of the existing body of published interviews, profiles, and critical articles, as well as a decade of correspondence between Cusatis and McCann. With international interest in McCann on the rise, this first full-length study of his career to date serves as an ideal point of entrance for students, scholars, and serious readers, and offers the biographical and critical foundation necessary for a deeper understanding of McCann's fiction.

let the great world spin colum mccann: TransAtlantic Colum McCann, 2013-01-01 1919. Emily Ehrlich watches as two young airmen, Alcock and Brown, emerge from the carnage of the First World War to pilot the very first non-stop transatlantic flight from Newfoundland to the west of Ireland. Among the letters being carried on the aircraft is one which will not be opened for almost a hundred years. 1998. Senator George Mitchell criss-crosses the ocean in search of an elusive Irish peace. How many more bereaved mothers and grandmothers must he meet before an agreement can be reached? 1845. Frederick Douglass, a black American slave, lands in Ireland to champion ideas of democracy and freedom, only to find a famine unfurling at his feet. On his travels he inspires a young maid to go to New York to embrace a free world, but the land does not always fulfill its promises for her. From the violent battlefields of the Civil War to the ice lakes of northern Missouri, it is her youngest daughter Emily who eventually finds her way back to Ireland. Can we pass from the new world to the old? How does the past shape the future? In *TransAtlantic*, National Book Award-winning Colum McCann has achieved an outstanding act of literary bravura. Intricately crafted, poetic and deeply affecting it weaves together personal stories to explore the fine line between what is real and what is imagined, and the tangled skein of connections that make up our lives.

let the great world spin colum mccann: In Harm's Way Javier Auyero, María Fernanda Berti, 2016-08-02 A harrowing look at violence among Argentina's urban poor Arquitecto Tucci, a neighborhood in Buenos Aires, is a place where crushing poverty and violent crime are everyday realities. Homicides—often involving young people—continue to skyrocket, and in the emergency room there, victims of shootings or knifings are an all-too-common sight. In *Harm's Way* takes a harrowing look at daily life in Arquitecto Tucci, examining the sources, uses, and forms of interpersonal violence among the urban poor at the very margins of Argentine society. Drawing on more than two years of immersive fieldwork, sociologist Javier Auyero and María Berti, an elementary school teacher in the neighborhood, provide a powerful and disarmingly intimate account of what it is like to live under the constant threat of violence. They argue that being physically aggressive becomes a habitual way of acting in poor and marginalized communities, and that violence is routine and carries across various domains of public and private life. Auyero and Berti trace how different types of violence—be it criminal, drug related, sexual, or domestic—overlap, intersect, and blur together. They show how the state is complicit in the production of harm, and describe the routines and relationships that residents, particularly children, establish to cope with and respond to the constant risk that besieges them and their loved ones. Provocative, eye-opening, and extraordinarily moving, *In Harm's Way* is destined to become a classic work on violence at the urban margins.

let the great world spin colum mccann: Conversations with Colum McCann Earl G. Ingersoll, Mary C. Ingersoll, 2017-07-13 *Conversations with Colum McCann* brings together eighteen interviews with a world-renowned fiction writer. Ranging from his 1994 literary debut, *Fishing the Sloe-Black River*, to a new and unpublished interview conducted in 2016, these interviews represent the development as well as the continuation of McCann's interests. The number and length of the

later conversations attest to his star-power. *Let the Great World Spin* earned him the National Book Award and promises to become a major motion picture. His most recent novel, *TransAtlantic*, has awed readers with its dynamic yoking of the 1845-1846 visit of Frederick Douglass to Ireland, the 1919 first nonstop transatlantic flight of Alcock and Brown, and Senator George Mitchell's 1998 efforts to achieve a peace accord in Northern Ireland. An extensive interview by scholar Cecile Maudet is included here, as is an interview by John Cusatis, who wrote *Understanding Colum McCann*, the first extensive critical analysis of McCann's work. An author who actually enjoys talking about his work, McCann (b. 1965) offers insights into his method of writing, what he hopes to achieve, as well as the challenge of writing each novel to go beyond his accomplishments in the novel before. Readers will note how many of his responses include stories in which he himself is the object of the humor and how often his remarks reveal insights into his character as a man who sees the grittiness of the urban landscape but never loses faith in the strength of ordinary people and their capacity to prevail.

let the great world spin colum mccann: Trauma and Recovery in the Twenty-First-Century Irish Novel Kathleen Costello-Sullivan, 2018-05-07 The desire to engage and confront traumatic subjects was a facet of Irish literature for much of the twentieth century. Yet, just as Irish society has adopted a more direct and open approach to the past, so too have Irish authors evolved in their response to, and literary uses of, trauma. In *Trauma and Recovery in the Twenty-First-Century Irish Novel*, Costello-Sullivan considers the ways in which the Irish canon not only represents an ongoing awareness of trauma as a literary and cultural force, but also how this representation has shifted since the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century. While earlier trauma narratives center predominantly on the role of silence and the individual and/or societal suffering that traumas induce, twenty-first-century Irish narratives increasingly turn from just the recognition of traumatic experiences toward exploring and representing the process of healing and recovery both structurally and narratively. Through a series of keenly observed close readings, Costello-Sullivan explores the work of Colm Tóibín, John Banville, Anne Enright, Emma Donohue, Colum McCann, and Sebastian Barry. In highlighting the power of narrative to amend and address memory and trauma, Costello-Sullivan argues that these works reflect a movement beyond merely representing trauma toward also representing the possibility of recovery from it.

let the great world spin colum mccann: Children of the Raven and the Whale Caroline Chamberlin Hellman, 2019-11-20 Taking its cue from Perry Miller's 1956 classic of American literary criticism, *The Raven and the Whale: The War of Words and Wits in the Era of Poe and Melville*, Caroline Chamberlin Hellman's new book examines ways in which contemporary multi-ethnic writers of the United States have responded to nineteenth- and early twentieth century texts historically central to the American literary canon. Each chapter of *Children of the Raven and the Whale* looks down the roads American literature ultimately traveled, examining pairs and constellations of texts in conversation. In their rewritings and layerings of new stories over older ones, contemporary writers forge ahead in their interrogations of a spectrum of American experience, whether they or their characters are native to the United States, first- or second-generation immigrants, or transnational. Revealing the traces of texts by writers such as Walt Whitman, Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Richard Wright, and James Baldwin lying beneath contemporary American literature by Chang-rae Lee, Jonathan Lethem, Jhumpa Lahiri, Junot Díaz, Joseph O'Neill, Colum McCann, and Ta-Nehisi Coates, Hellman posits the existence of a twenty-first-century American renaissance.

let the great world spin colum mccann: The City Since 9/11 Keith Wilhite, 2016-03-04 Charting the intersection of aesthetic representation and the material conditions of urban space, *The City Since 9/11* posits that the contemporary metropolis provides a significant context for reassessing theoretical concerns related to narrative, identity, home, and personal precarity. In the years since the September 11 attacks, writers and filmmakers have explored urban spaces as contested sites—shaped by the prevailing discourses of neoliberalism, homeland security, and the war on terror, but also haunted by an absence in the landscape that registers loss and prefigures

future menace. In works of literature, film, and television, the city emerges as a paradoxical space of permanence and vulnerability and a convergence point for anxieties about globalization, structural inequality, and apocalyptic violence. Building on previous scholarship addressing trauma and the spectacle of terror, the contributors also draw upon works of philosophy, urban studies, and postmodern geography to theorize how literary and visual representations expose the persistent conflicts that arise as cities rebuild in the shadow of past ruins. Their essays advance new lines of argument that clarify art's role in contemporary debates about spatial practices, gentrification, cosmopolitanism, memory and history, nostalgia, the uncanny and the abject, postmodern virtuality, the politics of realism, and the economic and social life of cities. The book offers fresh readings of familiar post-9/11 novels, such as Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*, but it also considers works by Teju Cole, Joseph O'Neill, Silver Krieger, Colum McCann, Ronald Sukenick, Jonathan Lethem, Thomas Pynchon, Colson Whitehead, Paul Auster, William Gibson, Amitav Ghosh, and Katherine Boo. In addition, *The City Since 9/11* includes essays on the films *Children of Men*, *Hugo*, and the adaptation of *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*, chapters on the television series *The Bridge*, *The Killing*, and *The Wire*, and an analysis of Michael Arad's *Reflecting Absence* and the 9/11 Memorial.

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to transmit memories of past events, these novels demonstrate how multidirectional memory can be not only collective but connective, as exemplified by the echoes that post-9/11 readers hear between different histories of violence that the novels chronicle, as well as between the past and the present.

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novels that openly and intentionally play in the speculative space between the real and the fictional. Drawing on theories of risk and uncertainty, *Derivative Lives* considers the surge in biofiction in Spain and globally, relating literary expression to concepts such as circumstantiality, derivatives, speculation, and game studies.

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