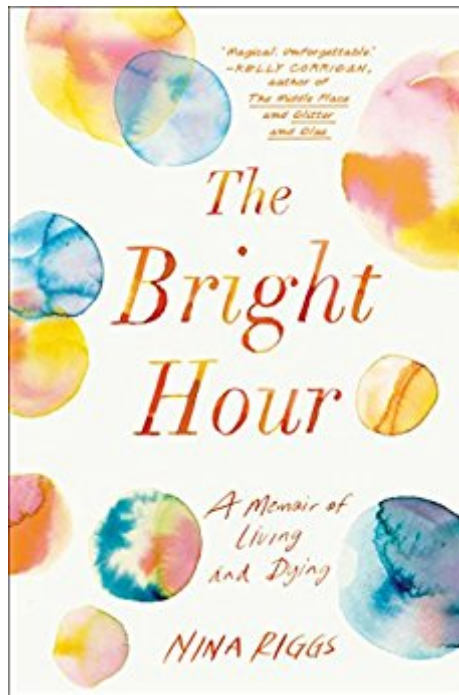




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The Bright Hour: A Memoir Of Living And Dying



Synopsis

* INSTANT NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER * “Stunning” | heartrending | this year’s When Breath Becomes Air. • Nora Krug, The Washington Post “Beautiful and haunting.” • Matt McCarthy, MD, USA TODAY “Deeply affecting” | simultaneously heartbreaking and funny. • People (Book of the Week) “Vivid, immediate.” • Laura Collins-Hughes, The Boston Globe Starred reviews from * Kirkus Reviews * Publishers Weekly * Library Journal * Most Anticipated Summer Reading Selection by * The Washington Post * Entertainment Weekly * Glamour * The Seattle Times * Vulture * InStyle * Bookpage * Bookriot * Real Simple * The Atlanta Journal-Constitution * An exquisite memoir about how to live—and love—every day with “death in the room,” from poet Nina Riggs, mother of two young sons and the direct descendant of Ralph Waldo Emerson, in the tradition of When Breath Becomes Air. “We are breathless, but we love the days. They are promises. They are the only way to walk from one night to the other.” Nina Riggs was just thirty-seven years old when initially diagnosed with breast cancer—one small spot. Within a year, the mother of two sons, ages seven and nine, and married sixteen years to her best friend, received the devastating news that her cancer was terminal. How does one live each day, “unattached to outcome”? How does one approach the moments, big and small, with both love and honesty? Exploring motherhood, marriage, friendship, and memory, even as she wrestles with the legacy of her great-great-great grandfather, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nina Riggs’s breathtaking memoir continues the urgent conversation that Paul Kalanithi began in his gorgeous When Breath Becomes Air. She asks, what makes a meaningful life when one has limited time? Brilliantly written, disarmingly funny, and deeply moving, The Bright Hour is about how to love all the days, even the bad ones, and it’s about the way literature, especially Emerson, and Nina’s other muse, Montaigne, can be a balm and a form of prayer. It’s a book about looking death squarely in the face and saying “this is what will be.” Especially poignant in these uncertain times, The Bright Hour urges us to live well and not lose sight of what makes us human: love, art, music, words.

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Customer Reviews

I would like to say my five star review is rooted in my own literary acumen and this particular book's compelling, beautiful, almost lyric prose. And the book is filled with beauty, lyric and profane. But since it was written by my wife, I feel like I have to come clean and say I'd be giving her five stars regardless, because I loved her more than anything. I love my kids a TON. They're amazing little guys, my favorite living people in the whole world, and I'd literally lay down in Boston traffic for them. But I'd swap them every day of the week for Nina. Sorry guys. Twice on Sundays. (Why Boston? Well, it may not be the worst traffic, but I think it's maybe got the drivers with the most mens rea of any city I've ever been to.) Seeing the book come together, getting to witness the transition from idea, to concept, to manuscript, now to nearly final publication, has been a treat not only because of the publication itself, but how much it's helped me and my family focus on the important things Nina left us. Her talent, her wit, charm, beauty, and her complete refusal to let terminal disease ruin the few bright days she had left after her cancer ran wild. The Bright Hour will be a tremendous legacy for our two boys as they grow and learn to live with their loss, and anytime they want access to Nina, a huge part of her will be right there on the page. But I also hope as many people as possible will share in that legacy and get to know Nina as well as anyone can now that she's gone. And not just because of the loss at such a young age, but because of the amazing person she was and the

tremendous talent she had for sharing her vision for leading a good life, even under the shadow of terminal disease. Trust me: She was the absolute best and it comes through beautifully here in *The Bright Hour*.

Reading a beautiful memoir about a person who is facing imminent death is not light reading, especially when you know that the author does not live to see the publication of her book. However, reading a stunning book with their insightful, witty, and compassionate views of what it takes to be a friend, a daughter, a mother, a wife, how to keep living even when in great pain, and how to just care, knowing that your days are truly numbered is beyond eye-opening. It is hard to comprehend how Nina Riggs wrote *THE BRIGHT HOUR: A MEMOIR OF LIVING AND DYING* considering what she faced. When did she do it? Between her mother dying of cancer shortly before she did, taking care of two young children, enduring painful treatment, going on trips with her family? Her stamina is astounding. While her future, or lack of one, is unbearable, and casts a shadow over the book, she embraces life. There is so much to learn about love and about how having a sense of humor can get you through the toughest of times. A descendent of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Riggs, feels her great-great-great grandfather with her as she is writing. She feels him when she takes a walk in the woods. She feels him when she visits her family's vacation home that her great-grandfather built. His words are shared throughout the book and resonate with the reader like a song playing on a loop in your head. "[Nature] always speaks of Spirit. It suggests the absolute. It is a perpetual effect. It is a great shadow pointing always to the sun behind us." The happiest man is he who learns from nature the lesson of worship. Funny. Riggs admits to her mother that she is not a nature fan after a week at overnight camp. Her devotion comes by way of reading a good book. Truth be told, she didn't connect with Emerson either, as a young girl. While a college student, walking in the woods, the bond was made. She rereads Montaigne, who clearly has had a profound impact on her all of her life, sharing this knowledge with her mother and her husband, and imparting his wisdom with her boys. A writer who connects her with Emerson. Memoir writers are a lot like teachers. Riggs guides us through her life, showing us many bumps as well as highlights, no preaching, a textbook not necessary. She carefully demonstrates how living with an incurable illness can be done with grace, a touch of humor, and a whole lot of honesty. The test at the end is that you did your best. This is how you will be remembered.

This is simply one of the most magnificent memoirs I've read in years. Even all the starred reviews

and raving newspaper reviews' praises doesn't do The Bright Hour justice. I plan to give this book to loved ones for years to come and ordered a few extra copies to donate to our local cancer resource center at Providence. What a treasure this amazing woman has left behind. Don't miss this book.

I read a review for this book in O magazine, but never expected it to be so much more. I too have invasive breast cancer but was 65 at diagnosis , not 37, with 2 young children. The writing is moving, the facts clearly defined. Most amazingly , I never expected to understand my own mothers death , my grief and how much women are connected by this dreadful disease., thank you, Nina, I feel I will see you someday and I will know you. Maybe our mothers will be with us as well.

Beautifully written story of courage mixed with family, humor and the unforgiving nature of cancer. Nina Riggs was a most talented writer who boldly shared her last months dealing with cancer while continuing to live the busy life as wife and mother. Needed to digest each chapter and perhaps purposefully as I didn't want Nina's story to end. Excellent.

If you love someone fighting disease or facing death, do yourself a favor and read Nina Riggs' beautiful book. She reminds us to live in the moment, to love those around us, and to seek humor and beauty every day. This book is a gift from one who leads us gently down a path we all must follow sooner or later. I'm blown away by her insights--and her strength to write them down for us. Thank you, Nina, for holding our hands.

This memoir stayed with me long after I finished the last page. The writer's words exude bravery and courage. I recommend this book.

I had to put the book down several times as I let Riggs's words wash over me - often needing to catch my breath just to continue reading. Riggs's writing is heartbreakingly gorgeous, and her ability to weave in Montaigne and RWE make this memoir rich and deeply layered. Not only will I recommend this book to everyone I know, I will also re-read it . . . it was an honor to be a part of Nina Riggs's experience in living and dying. I am more complete for having read this book.

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