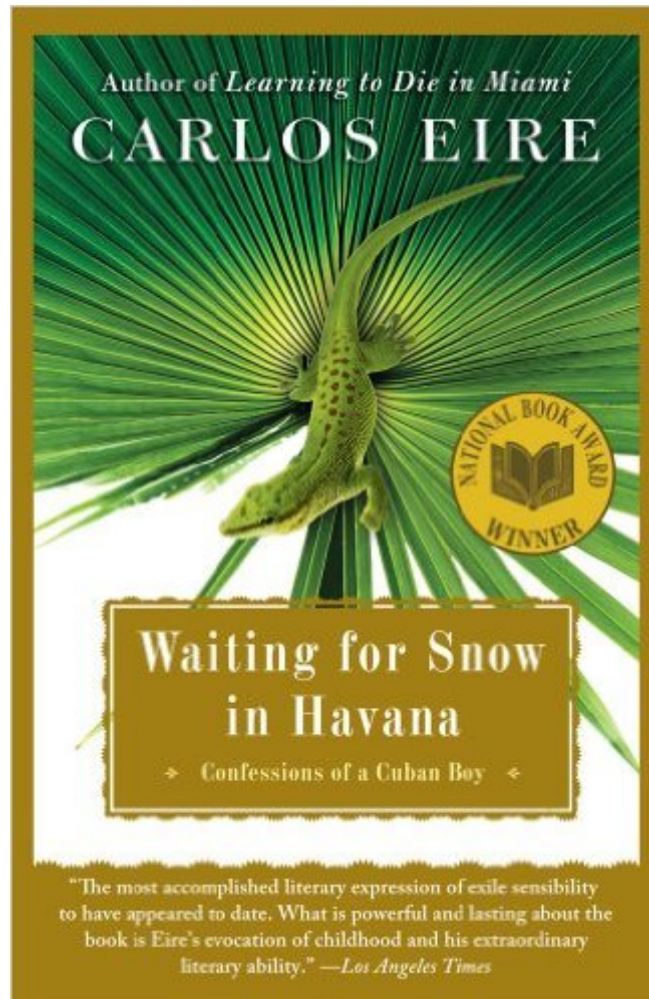


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Waiting For Snow In Havana: Confessions Of A Cuban Boy



Synopsis

“Have mercy on me, Lord, I am Cuban.” In 1962, Carlos Eire was one of 14,000 children airlifted out of Havana—exiled from his family, his country, and his own childhood by Fidel Castro’s revolution. Winner of the National Book Award, this stunning memoir is a vibrant and evocative look at Latin America from a child’s unforgettable experience. It is both an exorcism and an ode to a paradise lost. For the Cuba of Carlos’s youth—with its lizards and turquoise seas and sun-drenched siestas—becomes an island of condemnation once a cigar-smoking guerrilla named Fidel Castro ousts President Batista on January 1, 1959. Suddenly the music in the streets sounds like gunfire. Christmas is made illegal, political dissent leads to imprisonment, and too many of Carlos’s friends are leaving Cuba for a place as far away and unthinkable as the United States. Carlos will end up there, too, and fulfill his mother’s dreams by becoming a modern American man—even if his soul remains in the country he left behind. Narrated with the urgency of a confession, it is a eulogy for a native land and a loving testament to the collective spirit of Cubans everywhere.

Book Information

Paperback: 400 pages

Publisher: Free Press (December 24, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0743246411

ISBN-13: 978-0743246415

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.7 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (329 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #8,497 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #1 in [Books > History > Americas > Caribbean & West Indies > Cuba](#) #63 in [Books > History > Historical Study & Educational Resources](#) #99 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Ethnic & National](#)

Customer Reviews

This book may very well be the most moving book that I will end up reading this year. Some of that no doubt has to do with learning a bit about my own Cuban heritage (mi abuela es de Cuba), but it also has to do with reading an author of uncommon grace and depth, who lacks neither humor nor bitterness in remembering and longing for his abruptly ended childhood. You can’t help but to get misty eyed in the midst of your laughter; Eire lets the reader feel in ways that most authors can, at

their best, only dream of. It is rare that an author can combine multiple streams of thought into a [raging] river that contains both depth and complexity, but Eire appears to be one such author, combining history, memoir, theology and philosophy into a thick narrative about his childhood exile from Cuba. He is endowed with a tremendous sense of the poetic; he writes sensuously of Cuban nights before the Revolution, the perplexities of childhood (some experience really are universal) and the uneasiness of Cuba after Castro seized power. Eire is not without bitterness, either, as he reflects upon his exile and the difficulties it caused his family. He never saw his father again after he left Cuba, but his father also chose to not come over to the US with his mother; the mockery and sarcasm that Eire directs towards his father is understandable given the relational distance that his father placed within the relationship. The real highlight of the book, however, is Eire's ability to evoke emotion from the reader as he recalls his childhood. Reading his memories of Roman Catholic masses and schools is absolutely side splitting; the mixture of memory and imagination is written in a stream-of-consciousness style that brings to light the subjective reality of various events.

Carlos Eire's ironic yet desperately needful alteration of St. Jerome's prayer: " Have mercy on me, Lord, I am a Cuban. "-----Hundreds of books have been written about the horrors inflicted on the Cuban people by Castro, or to call him by the official title he bestowed upon himself, in a characteristic moment of humility, " The Maximum Leader. " Some have been written by survivors of Castro's prison camps, or by other Cubans, who nowadays are as bewildered as they are angered when some Hollywood Celeb--or some other famous wit-- makes a trip to Havana to shoot the breeze with Fidel. (Pol Pot and Nero being unavailable) And come back singing his praises. For Carlos Eire, his reawakening came in the aftermath of the Elian Gonzales affair. Carlos knew the kid was being sent back to hell by a sleazy administration under the eyes of a largely uncaring American public. Eire had done well for himself. A happily married family man and a respected professor at Yale, he thought he had put his Cuban past behind him, that it was no longer was capable of hurting him. He was wrong. As he admitted on T.V., He became wildly frantic and was unable to know a moment's peace until he finished writing his story, the confessions of a boy growing up in Havana at the time of Castro's takeover. For a hurriedly written memoir, this is a magnificent masterpiece. More poignant than the graphic documentations of tortured prisoners. Eire is truly an amazing writer. He weaves vivid imagery and dark humor into a fast paced, fascinating tale. As he states in his preamble: " This is not a work of fiction. But the author would like it to be. "This is a Greek tragedy set in the Caribbean.

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