



## Che, My Brother

**Juan Martin Guevara**

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*Juan Martin Guevara wants Che to be remembered as a human being, not as a myth.*

Fifty years after his death, Ernesto “Che” Guevara remains one of the most charismatic and controversial figures of the Cold War era. In this memoir, his younger brother Juan Martin Guevara offers an intimately personal look at the life and family of the man who became the legendary guerrilla soldier.

He begins where his brother’s life ended: at La Higuera, the remote Bolivian village where Che was killed by government troops in 1967. Visiting the site of his brother’s death for the first time, Juan Martin is dismayed to find self-appointed guides demanding payment from visitors and vendors selling tacky merchandise. He also finds people who sincerely idolize his brother as a Christ-like figure. “Che would have hated being turned into an idol,” Juan Martin states. “It is this myth I intend to fight, by giving back to my brother his human face.”

Juan Martin’s account has the directness and detail that only a family member can give, providing intimate glimpses of Che’s parents, siblings, and childhood. We also see boyhood quirks that later became enduring motifs of Che’s life, like the love of vigorous activity that helped him overcome childhood ailments, his early delight in thwarting authority figures, and his lifelong love of pseudonyms, which suggests that he was aware from an early age of the value of consciously created personas.

This book provides only indirect description of Che’s life after leaving his family. These parts of his life are represented by Juan Martin’s account of the family’s experiences, recollections of conversations with his brother, and excerpts from Che’s clever, sometimes self-deprecating letters. Much of the book is devoted to describing the long aftermath of Che’s life, as his family struggled for years to learn the truth about his death.

Juan Martin, who at 72 continues to share his brother’s youthful ideals, wants him to be remembered as a human being, not as a myth. His book is a powerful and affectionate testimony to the life behind the legend.

BRADLEY A. SCOTT (May/June 2017)

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