ForeWord Reviews

LITERARY

God Must Be Weeping: A Young Man's Journey of Courage, Passion, and Faith in the Backdrop of World War II

JD Winston
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“No bastard ever won a war by dying for his country. He won it by making the other poor dumb bastard die for his country.” The speaker was U.S. Army Gen. George Patton, whose attitude toward wartime behavior is espoused by Hunter, the most pragmatic thinker in a group of buddies, “The Misfits,” who meet in basic training and fight for their lives in a Philippine jungle during World War II.

JD Winston’s novel, *God Must Be Weeping*, is an examination of the soul-crushing expediency of Patton’s “no accountability” in a world gone mad. The other three Misfits are Mo, the God-fearing country boy; the wealthy and talented, Mako; and Monty, an introspective, academic type. These young men are asked to give their lives or, better yet, to take lives until their own lives are cut short in order to help save the world from totalitarian domination.

Winston’s main character, and the lens through which much of the story is told, is Monty, after passing up a job interview with the *New York Times* to join the army. The source of Monty’s patriotism is his father, a decorated veteran of World War I who died years later of complications from a war wound. But Monty’s mother has a fierce opposition to war, and he begins to understand her sentiments as the story unfolds and the war demands that he kill “without compassion or regret.”

A conflict of passions is also played out in Mo, an expert shot with an M1 carbine who reads the Bible with a flashlight under his blanket. As the saying goes, there may be “no atheists in foxholes,” but each of the Misfits will have his faith, as well as his resolve, tested.

Having written for the screen, Winston excels at the expression of ideas—and ideals–through character, dialogue, and action. But this, his first novel, is not seamless; point-of-view and the handling of time and transitions are minor issues, and Winston’s high diction and elevated prose style will not suit every reader’s taste. But *God Must Be Weeping* is an achievement.

While imprisoned by the Japanese, Monty, delirious with hunger and fright, imagines

that he is in court, defending his past performance as a soldier. His judge is the Almighty. He is pronounced “accountable” for killing men in battle, and he offers a humble act of contrition through the crack in the ceiling of his cell, to a God who, he suspects, may no longer be listening. Through principled young men in the most trying of times, Winston delivers drama by tackling the big questions.

Joe Taylor