

The Dreaming Road

Elizabeth Moore

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The Dreaming Road is a lovely tale about loss, healing, and what it means to be human.

Elizabeth Moore's *The Dreaming Road* is an autobiographically inspired novel of a mother's journey after her young daughter's suicide. It explores the nuances of life after death in an act of grief origami, folding and unfolding in endless creases of pain and processing, working toward sometimes stunning results.

The novel requires the suspension of skepticism; it is a multiplanar tale, with an introduction that details Diane's commune with her daughter from beyond the grave. Callie comes to Diane first in dreams, then as divine inspiration, guiding her hand to write the pages of the novel, which are shared from her perspective.

What follows is a moving, far-reaching recounting of Callie and Diane's healing journeys, opening with Diane's discovery of sixteen-year-old Callie's death and moving through the next five years. Over the course of the novel, Diane works to reconcile to her daughter's death under the guidance of light workers and friends. Meanwhile, Callie continues to uncover the meaning of an (after)life well lived.

The novel is most beautiful in its more earthly moments, where specific details about Diane's grief breed the most universal resonance. The obsessive desperation of her gardening in the months following Callie's passing, the effects of her grief on her romantic partnership, the specificity and detail of her final letting go: all are potent depictions of mourning and intense yet quixotically, frustratingly nonlinear expressions of grief.

As the story progresses, the plot becomes more and more focused on the ethereal, drifting between Callie's experiences in the afterlife and Diane's work with healers and light workers. The truths that Callie uncovers in the heavenlike realm that she calls Summer Wind are universal, but they are clumsily delivered.

Overriding beliefs—that all events are meant to be, so that early deaths are, in a way, predetermined—are a harder sell. They skirt the opportunity for a serious exploration of the grief caused by suicide and the significant mental health battles that face adolescents.

Diane's journey devolves into a series of tropes as it moves away from the gorgeously human details of her very real grief. Her spirit journeys, past life regressions, and conversations with mediums lack the power of scenes of her more simple mourning, such as of pulling weeds and her first days back at work. Still, the book ends strong and sweet, tying up its emotive journey.

Full of archetypal, teary-eyed catharsis, *The Dreaming Road* is a lovely tale about loss, healing, and what it means to be human.

JESSIE HORNESS (January 3, 2018)

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