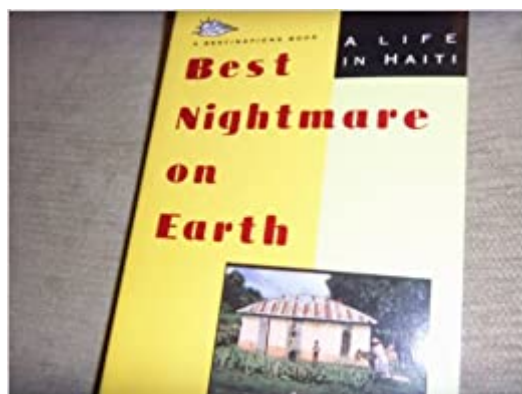


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Best Nightmare On Earth: A Life In Haiti (Destinations)



Synopsis

A kaleidoscopic memoir of a 35-year love affair with mysterious, exotic Haiti. The dialogue the author conducts with this beleaguered island is rich with surprising revelations and startling juxtapositions. "The best all-encompassing explanation of this . . . tragic island country that I have read".--Digby Diehl, Playboy.

Book Information

Series: Destinations

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Customer Reviews

Gold (Fathers) first visited Haiti in 1953 and has returned many times since to "my favorite place in the whole wide world." The nightmare aspect referred to in the title includes the burning of a suspected werewolf in Port-au-Prince and Gold's frightening confrontation with the roving henchmen called tonton macoutes. He lived in Haiti for periods during the Duvalier regimes, of both p ere and fils , and was at one point banned from the country for his reporting. Later, after political violence and the AIDS panic threatened the tourist trade, he was invited to serve as Haitian consul in San Francisco. He declined. Gold's remarks about the vagaries of Haitian politics, corruption and racism are acute and enlightening, but what sticks in the mind is his tender affection for the people and culture of a country "poor in all resources but the energies of imagination." Among other things, Gold's impressionistic memoir reveals what it's like to be a blanc who feels completely at home in a black society. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

In a rambling, autobiographical account spanning 37 years, novelist Gold (*Travels in San Francisco* , LJ 11/15/89) describes his fascination with Haiti, which began when he first visited the island in the early 1950s. Over the years he cultivated a cadre of friends who provided him entrance into the inner circle of Haitian society. His memoir is a kaleidoscope of impressions and experiences: voodoo ceremonies, cockfights, machete-armed police, malnourished children, young boys peddled for homosexual use, artists, writers, carnivals, and the sound of drums. Gold's affection for the island is apparent but the book suffers from a lack of solid framework. Only sketchy historical background is provided and Haiti's unstable political history is dealt with only in the context of his personal experience. As a result, interest lags quickly. A similar work is Amy Wilentz's *Rainy Season* (LJ 6/11/89), which successfully combines personal commentary with an in-depth view of Haiti's history, politics, and culture.- Marlene M. Kuhl, Baltimore Cty. P.L. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

His writing never got me interested in the island or the people.

This is one of the most compelling book that I ever read about Haiti. Mr. Gold is funny and objective. One could feel his love for Haiti popping out of the pages; he is not just another foreigner out to make a quick buck. Although his experiences in the book were limited to the capital, he gave a vivid account because he was in the thick of things. When I checked with family and friends on the veracity of some of Mr. Gold's claims, he seemed to have hit right on the money. I would recommend this book to anyone who loves Haiti.

I just had to respond because the only response posted is so off the mark! Gold clearly has a deep love & respect for Haiti & Haitians. He also has a wicked sense of humour & he apparently does not feel the need to whitewash what he sees. We must have read two different books!

This is an amazing book. I have traveled to Haiti 5 times, my longest stay being four months. This book made me feel as if I was back in the country I love so much. I would recommend this book to anyone who's heart has been grasped by this country.

First of all your ideas are not well founded since you did not live in Haiti long enough to place a judgement or an opinion. Your grounds are very weak when you see only one part of Haiti. Being like a horse on a race track, the author is only focusing on what you may consider the worst, I would like

to know when writers are going to start publishing the right stuff about a third world country.

While making no claims to be objective, this colorful account of Gold's 2 years in Haiti and dozens of trips in the 50 years since then, captures all the wild contradictions of the magical but suffering country.

I honestly think you were just making fun of Haiti and its people..

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