



Fire Shut Up in My Bones

Charles M. Blow

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A gorgeous, moving memoir of how one of America's most innovative and respected journalists found his voice by coming to terms with a painful past

New York Times columnist Charles M. Blow mines the compelling poetry of the out-of-time African-American Louisiana town where he grew up -- a place where slavery's legacy felt astonishingly close, reverberating in the elders' stories and in the near-constant wash of violence.

Blow's attachment to his mother -- a fiercely driven woman with five sons, brass knuckles in her glove box, a job plucking poultry at a nearby factory, a soon-to-be-ex husband, and a love of newspapers and learning -- cannot protect him from secret abuse at the hands of an older cousin. It's damage that triggers years of anger and searing self-questioning.

Finally, Blow escapes to a nearby state university, where he joins a black fraternity after a passage of brutal hazing, and then enters a world of racial and sexual privilege that feels like everything he's ever needed and wanted, until he's called upon, himself, to become the one perpetuating the shocking abuse.

A powerfully redemptive memoir that both fits the tradition of African-American storytelling from the South, and gives it an indelible new slant.

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