



# Love in a Dark Time: And Other Explorations of Gay Lives and Literature

*Colm Toibin*

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Colm Tóibín knows the languages of the outsider, the secret keeper, the gay man or woman. He knows the covert and overt language of homosexuality in literature. In *Love in a Dark Time*, he also describes the solace of finding like-minded companions through reading.

Tóibín examines the life and work of some of the greatest and most influential writers of the past two centuries, figures whose homosexuality remained hidden or oblique for much of their lives, either by choice or necessity. The larger world couldn't know about their sexuality, but in their private lives, and in the spirit of their work, the laws of desire defined their expression.

This is an intimate encounter with Mann, Baldwin, Bishop, and with the contemporary poets Thom Gunn and Mark Doty. Through their work, Tóibín is able to come to terms with his own inner desires -- his interest in secret erotic energy, his admiration for courageous figures, and his abiding fascination with sadness and tragedy. Tóibín looks both at writers forced to disguise their true experience on the page and at readers who find solace and sexual identity by reading between the lines.

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