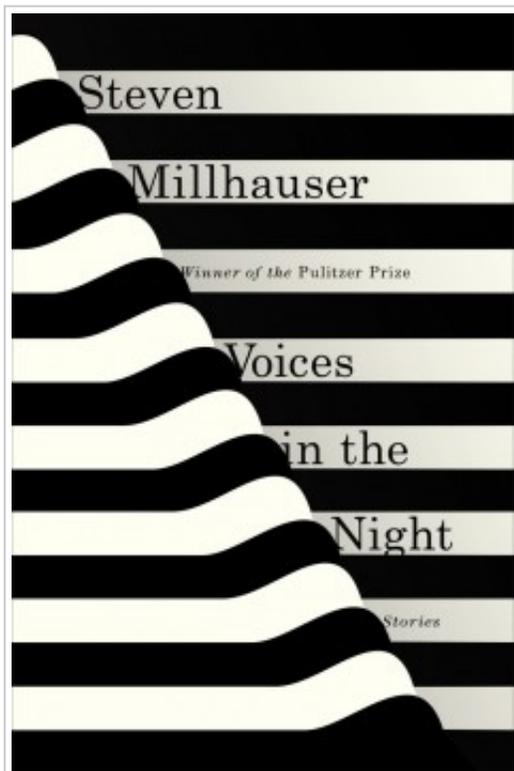


BookFilter

[Home](#) [Top Picks: All Books](#) [Voices in the Night](#)



Voices in the Night

by Steven Millhauser

Price: \$25.95(Hardcover)

Published: April 14, 2015

Rating: 0.0/5 (0 votes cast)

From the Publisher: From the Pulitzer and Story Prize winner: sixteen new stories—provocative, funny, disturbing, enchanting—that delve into the secret lives and desires of ordinary people, alongside retellings of myths and legends that highlight the aspirations of the human spirit.

Beloved for the lens of the strange he places on small town life, Steven Millhauser further reveals in *Voices in the Night* the darkest parts of our inner selves to brilliant and dazzling effect. Here are stories of wondrously imaginative hyperrealism, stories that pose unforgettably unsettling what-ifs, or that find barely perceivable evils within the safe boundaries of our towns, homes, and even within our bodies.

Here, too, are stories culled from religion and fables: Samuel, who hears the voice of God calling him in the night; a young, pre-enlightenment Buddha, who searches for...

[More](#)

Rate This Book

| [Rate/Review](#)

[Add To Bookshelf](#)

Get This Book

Go to your preferred retailer, click to choose a format and you'll be taken directly to their site where you can get this book.



What We Say

Bring on the adjectives: transporting, funny, bizarre, surreal, sweet, memorable, knee-sleeping, thought-provoking, unique. One could go on, but suffice to say Pulitzer Prize-winner Steven Millhauser delivers a new collection of short stories, 16 tales (and "tales" is probably the right word) for shivering and laughing over. What's he like? Perhaps Ray Bradbury or Jorge Luis Borges or John Collier (if you want to seem cool and namecheck an obscure but appropriate precursor) or "The Twilight Zone" without the (obvious) moralizing or really just Steven Millhauser. His stories are rooted in details, the here and now (wherever the here and now may be), a place so firmly imagined -- be it a backyard lawn or a palace of dreams -- that you never doubt it for a second. It's reality, but reality shifts and the strange and uncomfortable always slip in or linger just out of eyesight. "Coming Soon" is classic Millhauser: a man has moved from the city to an up-and-coming small town. Not a sleepy small town, no thank you, but a place where things are happening. A Saturday morning jaunt to a favored cafe in its bustling downtown allows our narrator to describe the pleasurable improvements taking place here and there: a new restaurant, an addition to a neighbor's home and so on. But the pace of change quickens and the parade of improvements becomes dizzying. Soon, this quiet town is a frenzy of activity and our hero gets lost simply trying to walk home because so many new developments and add-ons have taken place in the past few minutes. A row of townhouses replace a park perhaps or homes are remodeled beyond recognition and on and on. Desperate to orient himself, he's in his car now, trying to find his way. Construction is everywhere, even on his own block. Change is now a constant and our hero barely knows where he is anymore. Panicked, he asks for directions from a man in a hard hat and is sent fleeing up a newly built ramp onto a newly built highway headed God knows where. It's disturbing, bewildering, scary...and funny. And it can't be spoiled by describing it because Millhauser's writing is so diamond-sharp and distinctive. "Phantoms" uses one of his favorite devices -- a report or summary or some such official document -- to describe a town where people apparently see (sometimes or often or or once in a great while, depending on the person) other "people" who are not really people, but phantoms that walk away the moment they're spotted. This phenomenon is described and analyzed, explanations are offered but ultimately it's left as a dark puzzle. And on the stories come: a retelling of "Rapunzel" in which she and the Prince have their misgivings about the whole affair, a riotously amusing new adventure for Paul Bunyan that's pure pleasure, a moving story spun-off from the Bible tale of Samuel answering the voice of God and my favorite: a lovely, subtly impassioned, fanciful depiction of the soon-to-be Buddha as he awakens from pleasure to the possibilities of a contemplative life. Magic realism is a phrase crafted for Millhauser; it's the phrase of choice for refined critics discussing great writing that involves the fantastical. But isn't all great writing magical? It certainly is here. -- Michael Giltz

[Less](#)

What Others Say

“Vividly imaginative . . . In this new collection, Pulitzer Prize-winner Millhauser draws a gauzy curtain of hyper-reality over mundane events and creates an atmosphere of uneasiness that accelerates to dread. He establishes tense yet wondrous tones while never resorting to melodrama; his cool, restrained voice is profoundly effective . . . The gem of the collection is ‘A Voice in the Night,’ in which a young boy in the author’s own home town is transfixed by the biblical story of Samuel, who heard God’s voice and knew he must obey . . . The cumulative effect [of] the voices throughout is to transport the reader to an alternate world in which the uncanny lurks pervasively beneath the surface.” —Publishers Weekly