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Reading and Book Signing with author of "Sixpence House"

Paul Collins
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**"NOT EVEN WRONG:
Adventures in Autism"**

When literary historian Paul Collins' three-year-old son was diagnosed with autism, Collins did what he does best. He dug into the past to make sense of the perplexing present. Visit UOBookstore.com for more information.

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BOOKS BY LOIS WADSWORTH

Six Young Visionaries

In a troubled world.

**THE MIRACLE DETECTIVE:
An Investigation of Holy Visions**

by Randall Sullivan. Atlantic Monthly Press, 2004. Hardcover, \$25. Eugene reading at 7 pm on April 20 in the Knight Library Browsing Room, UO campus.

Calling his new book "a reconciliation of faith and doubt," contributing editor to *Rolling Stone* magazine, Randall Sullivan, further noted to a *Publishers Weekly* interviewer, "You don't have to give up doubt to have faith."

I had never seen the loaded terms "doubt" and "faith" used in this way before, much less deployed in the same sentence. But I was willing to give Sullivan the opportunity to dispel my skepticism in his thoroughly researched investigation into contemporary holy visions and apparitions of the Virgin Mary. In the spirit of full disclosure, I must tell you that I have read only a quarter of this fascinating, 442 page account. I intend to finish the book before Sullivan's 7 pm, April 20 reading at UO Bookstore.

Based on the publisher's notes, I have not yet read far enough to learn what happens to Sullivan when a short information gathering trip to Bosnia at the end of the 1990s war in the former Yugoslavia turns into a seven-week-long visit. It took Sullivan another eight years to digest his experience in Medjugorje (Medge-you-gor-yi-a) and put it in the largest possible context. Randall's experience rests on his extensive understanding of the history of the region, the history of religious sightings, and hundreds of hours of interviews with theologians and historians with expertise in the study of holy apparitions. Sullivan had access to the Vatican's postulators from the Sacred Congregation of the Causes for Saints, for example.

Sullivan's account of the six teenagers who witnessed the first of the apparitions in Medjugorje is fascinating, even to a non-believer. These kids were not the devout Catholics whom the priests might have believed, They were regular teenagers, sneaking cigarettes for a clandestine smoke, hurrying to grow up. Their reports were given in plain language. And yet, when questioned separately, each described the visions using the same words.

My attention was arrested by two specific details each of the kids reported after the first appearance. Lights signaled the approach of the image, then they saw a woman, wearing a robe. She held a baby in her arms. First, she uncovered the baby, then covered it, and uncovered it again before she left. Second, none of them could see her feet. She seemed to hover in the air.

The unusual, ritualistic activity of showing and covering the baby remind me of the strange, mystical details that occur in dreams that contain numinous figures. Likewise, the figure's invisible feet seems authentic to me, not something kids would make up. Sorry I can't tell you more about the book. But this is enough to keep this skeptic reading for another 300-plus pages.

Portland resident Sullivan is the author of numerous short pieces and two other books, *The Price of Experience: Power, Money, Image, and Murder in Los Angeles* and *LAabyrinth, A Detective Investigates the Murders of Tupac Shakur and Notorious B.I.G.*



BOOK NOTES (April 8 through May 6):

Harriet Rubin (*Dante in Love*) reads at 7 pm on April 13 at Barnes and Noble. ...UO Honors College professor **Henry Alley** reads his short story, "The Rembrandt Brotherhood," at 7:30 pm on April 13 in the Robert D. Clark Library. ...**Michael Curtis Ford** (*The Last King: Rome's Greatest Enemy*) reads at 7 pm on April 13 at Borders Books. ...Literary historian **Paul Collins** (*Not Even Wrong: Adventures in Autism*) reads at 7 pm on April 14 in the UO Bookstore...Poet **Maxine Scates** and her workshop students read at 5 pm on April 17 in Tsunami Books. ...Friends of the Eugene Public Library's **Annual Book Sale** April 17 (9 am-4 pm) and April 18 (9 am-4 pm), Lane County Fairgrounds, Wheeler Pavilion. ...Local poets **Jill Linninger, Jose Chavez** and **Karen Ford** read at 4 pm on April 18 in Tsunami Books. ...Investigative reporter **Randall Sullivan** (*The Miracle Detective*) reads at 7 pm on April 20 in the Knight Library Browsing Room, UO campus. ...Poet **Maurya Simon** (*Ghost Orchid*) reads at 7 pm on April 20 in the Eugene Public Library, downtown. ...UO medievalist **Warren Ginsberg** reads from Chaucer and Dante at 4 pm on April 20 in Alumni Lounge Gerlinger Hall, UO. ...National Book Award for Poetry finalist **Carol Muske-Dukes** reads at 7:30 pm on April 21 in Wieden+Kennedy Atrium, Portland. Tickets: (503) 227-2583. ...Novelist **Frederick Busch** (*A Memory of War*) reads at 8 pm on April 22 in the Knight Library Browsing Room, UO. ...**Barbara Erhenreich** (*Nickel and Dimed*) speaks at 7:30 pm on April 22 in LaSells Stewart Center, OSU campus, Corvallis. ...**Neal Bascomb** (*The Perfect Mile*) reads at 2 pm on April 25 in UO Bookstore. ...**William L. Sullivan** reads from his book, *Cabin Fever* and shows slides of building a long cabin from scratch at 7 pm on April 28 in the Knight Library Browsing Room. ...Garden columnist **Amy Stewart** (*The Earth Moved*) talks about earthworms at 1 pm on May 1 in Down to Earth Home and Garden. ...**Ariel Gore** (*Whatever, Mom*), editor of *Hip Mama* magazine, reads at 7 pm on May 4 in the UO Bookstore. ...Poet and recent National Book Critics Circle Award-winner **B.H. Fairchild** (*The Art of the Lathe*) reads at 8 pm on May 6 in Knight Library Browsing Room, UO campus. ...**Dawn G. Stuart** talks about book marketing in the 21st century at 6:30 pm on May 6 in Baker Downtown Center.