



BOOK DETAILS



Soul Bare: Stories of Redemption
by Emily P. Freeman, Sarah
Bessey, Trillia Newbell and more

Available August 2016

\$16, 224 pages, paperback

978-0-8308-4326-8

Stories of Redemption from the Best of Today's Influential Young Writers

Part I: Letting Go

More for You Than This – Shannan Martin

Joy – Trillia J. Newbell

Cold, Dark Ground – Jennifer J. Camp

Towers and Canyons – Serena Woods

Captivity – Kris Camealy

The Root – Angie Hong

The Waging and the Waiting – Tammy Perlmutter

The Yearbook – Linda Hahn

Of Old Mirrors and New Doors – Kelli Woodford

Part II: Leaning In

Liquid Courage – Amy Smith

Joy to the World! Really? Where? – Deana Chadwell

Nuance – Seth Haines

Pain and Holy Ground – Christina Gibson

When I Pursued Joy – Monica Sharman

Wrestling with God in the Art House Theater – Karissa Knox Sorrell

A Broken Love Story – Lindsey van Niekerk

Metamorphosis – Joy Bennett

Room – Tanya Marlow

Part III: Hope and Healing

Tie to the Deep – Tara Pohlkotte

Teenage Heretic – Amy Lepine Peterson

Letters of Intention – Sarah Bessey

Striptease – Sheila Seiler Lagrand

Without People Like You – Sarah Markley

Leaning Deep – Holly Grantham

Redemption Looks Beautiful on You – Shelly Miller

You're Not Alone – Holley Gerth

Gravity – Emily P. Freeman

Breathing Fresh Air – Mandy Steward

Look at Me, Daddy! – Dan King

The Cup – Jennifer Dukes Lee

Lost and Found – Cara Sexton

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AUTHOR BIO



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The Writers Behind *Soul Bare*



Cara Sexton describes herself as “part monk, part punk.” She lives with her husband and four children in beautiful southern Oregon, where she cultivates a passion for creativity and inspiration. Cara writes creative nonfiction, poetry, and fiction, and her work has appeared in the books *Finding Church* (Civitas Press, 2012) and *What a Woman Is Worth* (Civitas Press, 2014), as well as in many magazines and online publications. She has worked as nonfiction editor for *Duende* literary magazine and is currently writing a spiritual memoir while also completing her BFA degree in creative writing at Goddard College. You can (try to) keep up with her at carasexton.com, coming soon.

Shannan Martin is a writer who found her voice in the country and her story in the city. She and her jail-chaplain husband have four funny children who came to them across oceans and rivers. Shannan was rescued from the life she thought she wanted and is surprised every day by God’s goodness. She blogs at flowerpatchfarmgirl.com.



Trillia Newbell is the author of *Fear and Faith: Finding the Peace Your Heart Craves* (2015) and *United: Captured by God’s Vision for Diversity* (2014). Her writings on issues of faith, family and diversity have been published in the *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, *Desiring God*, *Christianity Today*, *Relevant Magazine*, *The Gospel Coalition* and more. She is currently director of community outreach for the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission for the Southern Baptist Convention. Along with writing, she is pursuing her MA in biblical counseling from Southern Theological Seminary. Trillia is married to her best friend, Thern. They reside with their two children near Nashville, Tennessee. You can find her at trillianewbell.com.

Jennifer J. Camp, author of *Loop: What Women Need to Know* and cofounder of Gather Ministries, lives in the San Francisco Bay Area with her three kids and very insecure dog. Her favorite thing to do? Listen to God’s voice in her life and encourage women to awake to the full life he invites us to have. Connect with her at gatherministries.com.



Serena Woods is a thinker who writes for various publications on- and offline. She’s an advocate for grace and writes her argument for the gospel at graceisforsinners.com.



AUTHOR BIO

Kris Camealy is a sequin-wearing, homeschooling mother of four and is passionate about Jesus, people and words. She's been known to take gratuitous pictures of her culinary creations, causing mouths to water all across Instagram. Once upon a time, she ran ten miles for Compassion International, a ministry for which she serves as an advocate. Kris is the author of *Holey, Wholly, Holy: A Lenten Journey of Refinement* and the follow-up *Companion Workbook*. She spends her free time managing gracetable.org and occasionally writing at kriscamealy.com.

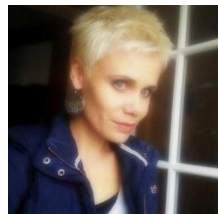


Angie Hong is a mom, wife and worship leader residing in Chicago. She has a background in music therapy and piano, and she leads worship at conferences locally and nationally, including the Christian Community Development Association, the Justice Conference and the Duke Center for Reconciliation. Angie is the main facilitator of Menders, a band exploring the intersection of worship and reconciliation. She blogs about identity, worship and reconciliation at angiekayhong.com.

Tammy Perlmutter writes about unabridged life, fragmented faith and investing in the mess at her blog, *Raggle-Taggle*. She recently launched a collaborative space, *The Mudroom*, making room for people who need a place to be fully themselves. Tammy writes guest posts, personal essays, flash memoir and poetry, and preaches sometimes. She lives in Chicago with her husband, Mike, and daughter, Phoenix.



Linda Hahn is a single mother of two teens living in south Florida. By day she is a counselor and schoolteacher. By night she is a dreamer, blogger and an unofficial semi-professional coffee shop critic. Linda understands the challenges of being a single mom with a type-A personality. Find her at thecaffeinatedlife.com.



Kelli Woodford lives in the Midwest, surrounded by cornfields and love, with her husband and seven blue-eyed children. They laugh, play, fight, mend, but they don't do anything that even slightly resembles quiet. Unless it's listening to their lives, which has proved to be the biggest challenge of them all.

Deana Chadwell is an award-winning poet and author of a poetry chapbook titled *Counterpane*. She publishes at stubbornthings.com and at americanthinker.org. She currently teaches writing at Pacific Bible College. Deana lives in southern Oregon with her husband.





AUTHOR BIO



Amy Smith is married to her high school sweetheart, has nine kids and, yes, she knows what causes that. She paints, reads and writes in equal parts and has an affinity for eighties music, coffee, chocolate, wine and developing annoying nicknames for her besties, but she loves Jesus most of all. Find her at alovestoryinthelilies.blogspot.com.

Seth Haines is a working stiff who makes his home in the Ozark Mountains. He and his wife, Amber Haines, have four boys and a dog named Lucy. Seth enjoys music, food, fly fishing and fine sentences. He is the author of *Coming Clean* (Zondervan, 2015), a story of pain, faith and the abiding love of God. You can find him at sethhaines.com.



Christina Gibson is a teacher, preacher and writer. She grew up in Colorado and studied at Baylor University and Truett Theological Seminary. Christina speaks and preaches at churches across the country and is currently finishing up an in-depth study of Exodus. When she's not blogging at christinamaygibson.com, she spends her free time trying to take a nap.

Monica Sharman is a home educator, freelance editor and author of *Behold the Beauty: An Invitation to Bible Reading* (BibleDude Press). She lives in Colorado with her husband, inventor of Crossbeams Toy, and three sons. She delights in children's fiction, poetry and drumming. Connect with Monica on Twitter @monicasharman and at monicasharman.wordpress.com.



Karissa Knox Sorrell is a writer, poet and ESL educator from Nashville, Tennessee. Her poetry and creative nonfiction have been seen in *St. Katherine Review*, *Relief Journal*, *Rock & Sling* blog, *San Pedro River Review*, *Parable Press*, *Silver Birch Press* and *Cactus Heart*, among others. Her poetry chapbook is titled *Evening Body* (Finishing Line Press). When not writing, Karissa trains and mentors ESL teachers in Metro Nashville Public Schools. Karissa writes about reading, writing and faith-wrestling at her blog karissaknoxsorrell.com You can follow her on Twitter @KKSorrell.

Lindsey van Niekerk's life has been largely defined by her experience growing up as a missionary kid in Haiti. After earning her degree in psychology and communications, she spent ten years serving in full-time ministry. Lindsey and her long-awaited South African McDreamy now find themselves living life on indefinite sabbatical and basking daily in





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the knowledge of God's radical love and grace. During this unknown season, God broke their hearts wide open through foster care and later the adoption of their now energetic, spirited, lover-of-life toddler, Maya Grace. Lindsey writes as "The Little Missionary Girl All Grown Up" at her personal blog lindseyvanniekerk.blogspot.com.



Joy Bennett has over seventeen years of experience as a professional writer. She consults with businesses and nonprofits around the world (tech, manufacturing, transportation, finance, health care, humanitarian) seeking to tell their stories and woo supporters in authentic and compelling ways. She is married with four children, three living. You can find her online at joywbennett.com and on Twitter @writingjoy.

Tanya Marlow, writer and author of *Coming Back to God When You Feel Empty*, has ten years' experience as a Christian minister, pastoral counselor and lecturer in biblical theology. She loves opera singing, dark chocolate and laughing at her own jokes. She lives in a vicarage in Devon, England, with her husband and energetic son and writes at tanyamarlow.com.



Tara Pohlkotte is a writer, mother of two sweet souls and lover of simple beauty. She is a published poet and author and was named one of BlogHer's 2013 Voices of the Year. Her most recent work is a small collection of poetry and essays surrounding motherhood titled *Dreamcatcher*.

Amy Lepine Peterson is a writer, ESL instructor and mother of two. She works with the Honors Guild at Taylor University and is interested in education, mothering, books, theology, intercultural communication, food, pop culture and any combination thereof. She blogs at amypeterson.net.



Sarah Bessey is a writer and blogger. She is a happy-clappy Jesus lover, a joyful subversive and a social justice wanna-be trying to do a bit of good. She lives in Abbotsford, British Columbia, with her husband, Brian, and their four tinies: Anne, Joseph, Evelyn and Margaret Love. You can find her online at sarahbessey.com.



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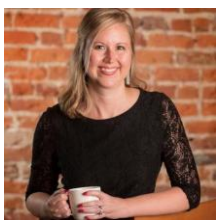
Sheila Seiler Lagrand and her husband, Rich, live with their three dogs in beautiful Trabuco Canyon, California. An anthropologist by training, her current projects include a book about grandparenting and another about recess—for adults. Her novel *Remembering for Ruth* released in November 2014. She enjoys writing, doodling and indulging her grandlittles. Find her at sheilalagrand.com.

Sarah Markley lives in Orange County, California, with her husband and two daughters and is a work-at-home mother. She manages two part-time nonprofit jobs and a household, leads a vibrant writing life and has often said that writing is God's thoroughfare to her heart. She plays Christmas music in August, wishes she could open a bakery and loves to share her table with friends, wine and good food as much as possible.



Holly Grantham found her way back to her home state of Missouri after years in Atlanta, where she attended college, married the love of her life and lived in an intentional community. She now lives in an antebellum stone house and homeschools her three boys. She is a writer and editor for *SheLoves* magazine. She blogs at *A Lifetime of Days* found at walkinginthelowlane.blogspot.com and is on Twitter @HollyAGrantham.

Shelly Miller is smitten with the power of story to make people think differently and is the founder of the Sabbath Society. Described as a poet with an acute taste for authentic honesty, she is a friend to the layperson who searches for hope. Her writing is featured in a number of magazines, books and websites, and weekly on her blog, *Redemptions Beauty*.



Holley Gerth is the best-selling author of *You're Already Amazing* and several other books. She's also a life coach, speaker and cofounder of incourage.me. You can find her online at holleygerth.com. Holley lives in the South, where she shares her heart and home with her husband, Mark.

Emily P. Freeman is the author of several books, including *A Million Little Ways*, *Simply Tuesday* and the Wall Street Journal Bestseller *Grace for the Good Girl*. Emily creates space for souls to breathe on her blog, *Chatting at the Sky*, where she's been quietly writing for nearly ten years. Emily and her husband, John, live in North Carolina with their three children.





AUTHOR BIO



Mandy Steward is an artist, writer and teacher. She teaches art locally and online and runs a correspondence school called The Magic School. She blogs regularly at messycanvas.com and contributes to annapurnaliving.com. She also self-publishes a subscription based zine for artists called the *Secret Message Society*. Steward has written a spiritual memoir called *Thrashing About with God: Finding Faith on the Other Side of Everything*. She attributes her personal freedom to the process of writing that book.

Dan King serves as Patheos Faith and Work Channel editor for The High Calling, blogger at BibleDude.net and president of Fistbump Media, LLC. He's author of *The Unlikely Missionary* and *Activist Faith*. He lives in Sarasota, Florida, with his wife, Krista, and their two children. You can connect with him on Twitter @bibleDude.



Jennifer Dukes Lee is the author of *Love Idol*. She's a writer for Dayspring's (in)courage and a community editor for The High Calling. She's a grace-dweller and storyteller, writing regularly at her blog jenniferdukeslee.com.



BOOK EXCERPT



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Available August 2016
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The women and men of *Soul Bare* not only intimately understand the risks of exposure, but they are also willing to share their most poignant and painful moments with you. *Soul Bare* features contributions from the best of today's influential young writers, including

- Emily P. Freeman
- Trillia Newbell
- Holley Gerth
- Seth Haines
- Jennifer Dukes Lee
- and many more

“Together we are a living mosaic.”

There are different kinds of truth telling. There's a height above laundry piles and laughter. There's a depth below bad hair days and fast-food confessions. When I said yes to coordinating a book about authenticity, about the raw and real baring of our souls for a holy, redemptive purpose, I did so without anything in particular to say but with an open heart to see what he had to show me. I did so because this project was his from the beginning. It has always been his. And now, three years after God stirred my own scarred and broken heart with the whisper of his love for the scarred and broken depths of yours, I know one thing I didn't know when I started. It is something I think you'll come to know, too, as you recognize familiar faces and familiar shadows that challenge even the most radiant countenance among us.

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:37-39 ESV)

You've heard the verses before. You may have even sung the songs. But do you *know* this, really, to be true? Do you know that your wounds, too, are welcome? Do you know that the soul-bare places, the sights and sounds of your life that you shelter from public display, belong to him? That he resides there? That he *redeems* there? My prayer for you, reader, is that you do. That you always will. And that these pages will remind you.

The stories that follow were each written by a different author, all of them telling their own redemptive soul-bare truth. . . .

To tell our truth is to link arms across the divides that keep us out, to close the gaping lie that says our wounds do not matter. Together we are a living mosaic—a tiled path winding through the beauty and pain of human experience and leading toward redemption—and this book, together with your own soul-bare stories, is a work of art that speaks of forgiveness, grace and healing. We tell the stories of life and love, bound together in the perfection and completion of Christ's great sacrifice. The very Word of God is, after all, a collection of broken stories about broken people just like us. Your story is your own and has been written by the Creator with purpose. Even if your edges are chipped, your story is beautiful. Tell it.

— Taken from the introduction by Cara Sexton



Q & A



Cara Sexton describes herself as “part monk, part punk.” She lives with her husband and four children in beautiful southern Oregon, where she cultivates a passion for creativity and inspiration. Cara writes creative nonfiction, poetry, and fiction, and her work has appeared in the books *Finding Church* (Civitas Press, 2012) and *What a Woman Is Worth* (Civitas Press, 2014), as well as in many magazines and online publications. She has worked as nonfiction editor for *Duende* literary magazine and is currently writing a spiritual memoir while also completing her BFA degree in creative writing at Goddard College. You can (try to) keep up with her at carasexton.com, coming soon.

Your Story Matters

Why did you decide to bring together the stories of *Soul Bare*?

Cara Sexton: Within the Christian community, so often we feel the need to look like we have it all together, to appear that everything in our lives is shiny and perfect. But this is a lie that keeps all of us at a distance from real community and true authenticity. I wonder, if we seek to emulate Christ, from whom are we hiding and why?

The deeper I learned to listen to those around me, the more I realized that all of us, every single person, at some level, has a story of shame, or grief, or fear, or vulnerability that in some way has complicated our experience of community or our walk with God. Yet most people are afraid to let their messy, complicated lives out into the open. We dress up for church on Sunday and we smile and shake hands, but we hide our deepest selves, our real lives, from one another.

I don't believe it is intended to be this way. I believe our vulnerability, our failures and our fears are the primary spot where the gospel has always penetrated first and deepest. I believe redemption happens over and over again for us in large and small ways and that sharing our stories – not just the neat and pretty stories but the bloody and broken ones too – is part of the mission of sharing the gospel. Jesus always operated within vulnerability, in the very center of brokenness, and did not shy away from the messy edges. I think we ought to do the same with one another – we ought to use our most tender places, our soul bare stories, to connect with each other and with the Divine.

What is at the heart of *Soul Bare*?

Cara: The very heart of *Soul Bare* is this: your story matters. It matters even if it isn't finished yet, even if it's not wrapped up with a bow and a Sunday school lesson. It matters if you've never told anyone before, or if you aren't sure how to reconcile it with your faith, or if you're scared or ashamed or lost. It still matters. The Bible itself is a work of soul bare stories, every character in it a broken, unlikely hero. And yet these broken, complex stories are the legacy of God's redemption. We turn to these stories to see how God redeems. *Soul Bare* is evidence of the down-and-dirty, nitty-gritty side of a real faith.

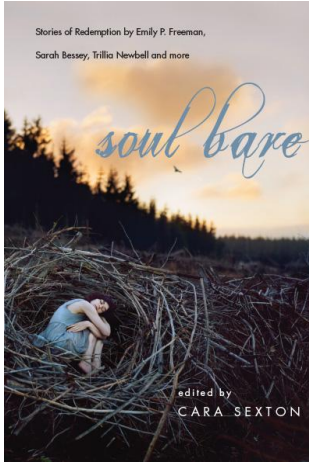
If you are really walking with honesty through this life, then you have rough edges. Reconciling the messiness of life with the goodness of a God we cannot fully understand is not easy, and as a community of people, all of us seeking truth and meaning in our lives, we need to stop making the church a country club for those who can look the most put together. Instead, we need to be a collective of groaning souls bringing our wounds and our gifts to one another, watching and becoming the redeeming love of God. *Soul Bare* is a collection of stories that attempt to deepen the conversation and invite the whole truth into the light, where everybody belongs.

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Q & A



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What do you hope readers take away from *Soul Bare*?

Cara:

- You matter, your life matters and your story matters – to God and to others.
- There is nothing you have experienced or done, thought or said, and there is nobody you have been or known, that cannot be a wildly important part of the ever-widening, always-deepening gospel of grace.
- Where you are right now, right here, in this very moment, is a valuable, useful part of your story and of how God will use you in the world. You do not have to have figured things out, gotten your life together or achieved some standard of perfection before your own redeeming story can have value. Every step of the way, look for the story that is being written with your life and your experiences. Every step of the way, look for grace and purpose, because it is all useful for redeeming love and for the building of the kingdom.
- More than anything we want readers to know that they are not alone and that Christianity is not a club where people have reached a pinnacle of perfection. Instead it is a collective of wide-open souls who are all broken, each of us thirsty for grace, and there is room for us all.