



Going Blind: A Memoir

Mara Faulkner

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Memoir and meditation on blindness.

Mara Faulkner grew up in a family shaped by Irish ancestry, a close-to-the-bone existence in rural North Dakota, and the secret of her father's blindness—along with the silence and shame surrounding it. Dennis Faulkner had retinitis pigmentosa, a genetic disease that gradually blinded him and one that may blind many members of his family, including the author. Moving and insightful, *Going Blind* explores blindness in its many permutations—within the context of the author's family, more broadly, as a disability marked by misconceptions, and as a widely used cultural metaphor. Mara Faulkner delicately weaves her family's story into an analysis of the roots and ramifications of the various metaphorical meanings of blindness, touching on the Catholic Church of the 1940s and 1950s, Japanese internment, the Germans from Russia who dominated her hometown, and the experiences of Native people in North Dakota. Neither sentimental nor dispassionate, the author asks whether it's possible to find gifts when sight is lost.

"...[a] beautiful book ... a good read ... thought-provoking." — H-Net Reviews (H-Disability)

"...a memoir with many layers ... Faulkner has clearly done extensive research and she expertly unfolds her findings and her confusions [sic]. She doesn't just tell readers about her experience, but invites them to share in making sense of her contemplations and discoveries. While this is not a light read, it is an extremely rewarding one." — Irish America

"...this is not merely an autobiography, but a critical chronicle about multiple conceptions of 'blindness.' So, in *Going Blind*, the reader could also find a piece with ethnographic value—a book in which analysis of social behavior and fieldwork play core roles." — Metapsychology

"An incredible story that stays with you long after finishing the final page." — Emily Rapp, author of *Poster Child: A Memoir*

"This is a remarkable, multidimensional, and accomplished memoir. The author renders the lives of her family members with candor, sensitivity, and integrity." — G. Thomas Couser, author of *Recovering Bodies: Illness, Disability, and Life Writing*

Mara Faulkner, OSB, is Associate Professor of English at the College of St. Benedict. She is the author of *Protest and Possibility in the Writing of Tillie Olsen* and *Born of Common Hungers: Benedictine Women in Search of Connections*.

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