



# On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous

Written by Ocean Vuong

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On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous

# On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous

By Ocean Vuong

## On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous

Poet Ocean Vuong's debut novel is a shattering portrait of a family, a first love, and the redemptive power of storytelling

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On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous

## On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous Review

On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous is a letter from a son to a mother who cannot read. Written when the speaker, Little Dog, is in his late twenties, the letter unearths a family's history that began before he was born — a history whose epicenter is rooted in Vietnam — and serves as a doorway into parts of his life his mother has never known, all of it leading to an unforgettable revelation. At once a witness to the fraught yet undeniable love between a single mother and her son, it is also a brutally honest exploration of race, class, and masculinity. Asking questions central to our American moment, immersed as we are in addiction, violence, and trauma, but undergirded by compassion and tenderness, On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous is as much about the power of telling one's own story as it is about the obliterating silence of not being heard.

## On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous Amazon

With stunning urgency and grace, Ocean Vuong writes of people caught between disparate worlds, and asks how we heal and rescue one another without forsaking who we are. The question of how to survive, and how to make of it a kind of joy, powers the most important debut novel of many years.

May 31 marks the 200th anniversary of Walt Whitman's birth, and the best present we could possibly receive is Ocean Vuong's debut novel, "On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous." The connection between the Good Gray Poet and this young Vietnamese immigrant may seem tenuous, but with his radical approach to form and his daring mix of personal reflection, historical recollection and sexual exploration, Vuong is surely a literary descendant of the author of "Leaves of Grass." Emerging from the most margin

May 31 marks the 200th anniversary of Walt Whitman's birth, and the best present we could possibly receive is Ocean Vuong's debut novel, "On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous." The connection between the Good Gray Poet and this young Vietnamese immigrant may seem tenuous, but with his radical approach to form and his daring mix of personal reflection, historical recollection and sexual exploration, Vuong is surely a literary descendant of the author of "Leaves of Grass." Emerging from the most marginalized circumstances, he has produced a lyrical work of self-discovery that's shockingly intimate and insistently universal.

The fact that we can hear Vuong's voice today in America stems from a function of tragedy and serendipity. As Vuong explains in his 2016 poetry collection, "Night Sky With Exit Wounds," his grandfather was a U.S. soldier who found a farm girl in Vietnam. "Thus my mother exists," he writes. "Thus I exist. Thus no bombs = no family = no me."

That willingness to solve the equation of his own existence, no matter what its components, is a . . .

To read the rest of this review, go to The Washington Post:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/entert...> ...more

## On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous A Novel

ON EARTH WE'RE BRIEFLY GORGEOUS will be described--rightly--as luminous, shattering, urgent, necessary. But the word I keep circling back to is raw: that's how powerful the emotions here are, and how you'll feel after reading it--scoured down to bone. With a poet's precision, Ocean Vuong examines whether putting words to one's experience can bridge wounds that span generations, and whether it's ever possible to be truly heard by those we love most.

This is such a beautiful book title and it was the title that drew me to read the description and request a copy of it. Not only is the title beautiful, but much of the writing here is as well. It's described as literary fiction, but a brief look at Ocean Vuong's bio after I read this book made the biographical nature of the story striking. This letter from a young Vietnamese immigrant to his mother who doesn't know how to read is raw, impactful, achingly sad, painful to read. It is filled with This is such a beautiful book title and it was the title that drew me to read the description and request a copy of it. Not only is the title beautiful, but much of the writing here is as well. It's described as literary fiction, but a brief look at Ocean Vuong's bio after I read this book made the biographical nature of the story striking. This letter from a young Vietnamese immigrant to his mother who doesn't know how to read is raw, impactful, achingly sad, painful to read. It is filled with flashbacks to his childhood when he is bullied at school, physically abused by his mother, protected by his grandmother. It is filled with stories and memories of his mother and grandmother's past fleeing Vietnam as their pasts become part of his story.

It is about a love between a mother and son. It is a story of a young boy trying to find his place in this country. It's an intimate portrait of his first relationship as he falls in love with another boy. (A warning to those who might be bothered by explicit sex scenes. You'll find them here.) The vivid descriptions of the times he spent in the nail salon where his mother worked were eye opening. There's drug addiction. There are also poignant moments reflecting his love of his mother and grandmother. The stream of consciousness felt a bit disjointed in last part feeling more like random thoughts, and it lacked the cohesiveness of the earlier part for me., thus 4 instead of 5 stars. This book is not for everyone, but it's worth reading for the beautiful language and amazing portrait of the Vietnamese immigrant experience, for the intimate piece of his heart and soul that this writer shares.

I received an advanced copy of this book from Penguin Press through Edelweiss. ...more

## On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous Pdf

me: [facedown on the floor] listen everything is totally fine!

Vuong's writing made me feel emotions I didn't know I was capable of feeling. From now on, my morning routine will include at least 10 minutes of sitting on my bed and thinking about this book and generally lamenting the otherwise cataclysmic experience of being alive!

rtc

Thoughtful and tender, *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* meditates on the powers of storytelling. The autobiographical novel's framed as a letter from a queer Vietnamese son, Little Dog, to his illiterate single mother, Rose. Across three expansive parts Little Dog reflects on his turbulent youth spent in Hartford, Connecticut, and hopes that the act of remembering family history through writing might heal longstanding wounds and bring parent and child closer. Using as guideposts the works of thin

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## On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous Poem

(i want to tattoo on earth we're briefly gorgeous on my ribs but it's cool, i'm cool abt it)

This review is also posted on my blog.

I received an ARC from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Ocean Vuong is first & foremost a poet and *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* is his literary debut (he also has a poem by the same title). It's not a novel novel, though, not in this very Western sense we're all used to. There are no prominent arcs or villains, or any ascending tension (i want to tattoo on earth we're briefly gorgeous on my ribs but it's cool, i'm cool abt it)

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Ocean Vuong is first & foremost a poet and *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* is his literary debut (he also has a poem by the same title). It's not a novel novel, though, not in this very Western sense we're all used to. There are no prominent arcs or villains, or any ascending tension. It's described as a letter from a son to his mother & that's how it reads, but you could also call it a memoir and not be too far off the mark.

The book is divided into three sections, none of them with titles, apart from simple Roman numbers. But their themes are obvious nonetheless (being an immigrant in the US, being gay, dying) and they're overflowing with emotions. You can't really forget that Vuong is a poet, with how beautifully crafted this novel is. He doesn't often name things, instead lets himself be vague with metaphors & trusts the reader will understand what he's getting at anyway. The whole experience is a lot like reading a poem, but this isn't just a novel in verse & it's not just a letter, either. It blurs the lines and it does it without you even noticing.

Just like everything Vuong published so far, *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* is very raw, visceral even and vicious at times. But all the feelings (pain) it evokes ring true. That's the real strength of Vuong's novel: the honesty evident not only in the emotions it brings to life, but in the life itself that it describes; all the ups-and-downs, all the ugly details, all the not-poetry-like details. There's no shying away from the mundanity of life here, from parts the fairy tales (and porn) omit.

TW: on page death, child abuse, drugs, war descriptions, homophobia, animal violence,

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No review. Just a list of adjectives.



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On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous

Brutal

Raw

Devastating

Beautiful

Incandescent

Stunning

The author didn't write this book; he opened his heart and just let it bleed all over the pages. Reading it cracked mine open and turned me inside out.

Just a sample: "Did you know people get rich off of sadness? I want to meet the millionaire of American sadness. I want to look him in the eye, shake his hand, and say, "Its been an honor to serve my country".

## On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous Audiobook

This work is called a novel but it is a ball of flame tossed into a dark night, blinding, brilliant, searing. Who knows if it is poetry or novel or memoir; the language fills the mouth and is saturated with truth. We recognize it. We've tasted it. We are pained by it. It still hurts.

Something here is reminiscent of the epic poetry of Homer. Life's brutality, man's frailty, the odyssey, the clash of civilizations, the incomparable language undeniably capturing human experience, these things make This work is called a novel but it is a ball of flame tossed into a dark night, blinding, brilliant, searing. Who knows if it is poetry or novel or memoir; the language fills the mouth and is saturated with truth. We recognize it. We've tasted it. We are pained by it. It still hurts.

Something here is reminiscent of the epic poetry of Homer. Life's brutality, man's frailty, the odyssey, the clash of civilizations, the incomparable language undeniably capturing human experience, these things make Vuong someone who heightens our awareness, deepens our experience, shocks us into acknowledgement of our shared experiences. What have we in common with a Greek of ancient times singing of a war and the personal trials of man? What have we in common with a gay immigrant boy writing of war and the personal trials of man?

The story is clear enough but fragmentary. In a Nov 2017 LitHub interview, Vuong tells us he's writing a novel composed of woven inter-genre fragments. To me, a book made entirely out of unbridged fractures feels most faithful to the physical and psychological displacement I experience as a human being. I'm interested in a novel that consciously rejects the notion that something has to be whole in order to tell a complete story. I also want to interrogate the arbitrary measurements of a "successful" literary work, particularly as it relates to canonical Western values. For example, we traditionally privilege congruency and balance in fiction, we want our themes linked, our conflicts resolved, and our plots ironed out. But when one arrives at the page through colonized, plundered, and erased histories and diasporas, to write a smooth and cohesive novel is to ultimately write a lie. In a way, I'm curious about a work that rejects its patriarchal predecessors as a way of accepting its fissured self. I think, perennially, of Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's "Dictée." This resistance to dominant convention is not only the isolated concern of marginalized writers "but all writers" and perhaps especially white writers, who can gain so much by questioning how the ways we value art can replicate the very oppressive legacies we strive to end. The novel he speaks of is this one. I did not understand that paragraph when I first read it as well as I do now. I am more aware, too, having looked closely for the Western world's acknowledged historical tendency to erase or ignore pieces of experience not congruent with their own worldview.

The language Vuong brings is exquisite and extraordinary: "The fluorescent hums steady above them, as if the scene is a dream the light is having." "the thing about beauty is that it's only beautiful outside of itself." "The carpet under his bare feet is shiny as spilled oil from years of wear." "repeating piles of rotted firewood, the oily mounds gone mushy" "He had a

On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous

thick face and pomaded hair, even at this hour, like Elvis on his last day on earth.

Vuong repeats motifs to tie the experiences of one person to the rest of his life, to tie one person's experiences to those of others: "I'm at war." "We cracked up. We cracked open." "You never see yourself if you're the sun. You don't even know where you are in the sky." "My cheek bone stinging from the first blow." "I was yellow."

A teen, immigrated to the U.S. from Vietnam with his mother, grandmother, and aunt finds himself fleeing his "shitty high school to spend [his] days in New York lost in library stacks," from whence he, first in his family to go to college, squanders his opportunity on an English degree.

The teen discovers his gayness and does not flee it, though his white lover agonizes and denies all his life. We watch that boy fall, wither, die under the scourge of fentanyl and opioid addiction and Vuong places the scourge in the wider context of an awry world.

Despite (or perhaps because of) the fragmented, shattered nature of the tale, there is a real momentum to this novel, Vuong telling us things not articulated in this way before: a familiar war from a new angle, the friction burn of the immigrant experience, the roughness of gay sex, the madness of living untethered in the world. The language is so precise, so surprising, so wide-awake and fresh, that we read to see.

Last year, in September of 2018, I reviewed Vuong's first book of poetry, *Night Sky with Exit Wounds*. The poems had many of the same tendencies toward epic poetry—they were big, and meaningful. On my blog I have attached a short video of Vuong reading from that collection to give you some idea of his power. You're welcome, readers. ...more

Thank you to Penguin for an advance copy of this book.

Sometimes you think you know well the geography of the land of words and language. Then, a book takes you by the hand and says look. And it shows you soaring mountains, crystalline waterfalls, and golden meadows you'd never before seen. You see your world in a whole new way.

This is that book.

This book packs an unfathomable amount of terrible, haunting beauty; wisdom; love; sensuality; and living and dying into its urgent 242 pages. But mak Thank you to Penguin for an advance copy of this book.

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On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous

This is that book.

This book packs an unfathomable amount of terrible, haunting beauty; wisdom; love; sensuality; and living and dying into its urgent 242 pages. But make no mistake: it is not a quick read. You will find yourself dwelling on single lines, running your fingers along them in wonder of their craft.

On every page, Ocean Vuong turns you inside out to show you how your heart is stitched together; turns the fabric of humankind inside out to show you how itâ€™s stitched together.

Reading some books feels like staring into the sun, robbing you of your vocabulary to describe them, the way the sun temporarily steals your sight.

And so you have left only the simplest and most stalwart words to describe what youâ€™ve seen:

Masterpiece.

...more

On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous

## On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous Excerpt

A book which manages to be both raw and polished, ultimately I think this is an exploration of self and all the myriad factors that combine to create an individual. The narrator has a complicated inheritance that leads back to Vietnam in the 1960s, and he suffers for racial reasons in America as well as from the overhang of war which has never left his grandmother and mother.

The second part of the story revolves around a delicate love affair, one haunted by its own troubles grounded in addiction. A book which manages to be both raw and polished, ultimately I think this is an exploration of self and all the myriad factors that combine to create an individual. The narrator has a complicated inheritance that leads back to Vietnam in the 1960s, and he suffers for racial reasons in America as well as from the overhang of war which has never left his grandmother and mother.

The second part of the story revolves around a delicate love affair, one haunted by its own troubles grounded in addiction.

The prose can be luminous in places, over-written in others (on trainers with lights in their soles: 'the world's smallest ambulances, going nowhere' - yuk!) The strength, for me, is the fragile, anxious atmosphere, where violence is always just about to explode, even in places that should be safe, that are, somehow, simultaneously, loving.

As is often the case with these literary, fragmented novels, as much is said via the silences, breaks and interstices as in the text itself. A haunting read.

Many thanks to the publisher for an ARC via NetGalley. ...more

Rating : 4.5 stars

So keen to read more of Vuong's work now. This book is magically poetic. I have a fondness for lyrical books but often books marketed as 'lyrical' turn out to be too flowery, unnecessarily elaborate in words. But this one had gorgeous prose. It explores loneliness, growing up as a gay man, war, the relationship between a mother and son. It is so beautiful. I don't think I can review it with justice.

On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous

## On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous Barnes And Noble

On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous, the bold and bracing debut novel by acclaimed poet Ocean Vuong, centers on Little Dog, the son of a Vietnamese immigrant mother and an absent father. Raised in present-day Hartford in a predominantly white community, Little Dog struggles from an early age to both assimilate with his peers and to honor his Vietnamese heritage, but here Vuong deviates from the standard immigration story blueprint in favor of something more darkly sensual and internal. As the story unfolds, the reader comes to understand that the novel is an elaborate letter written from Little Dog to his mother, though she will never read it, as she is illiterate: the story he tells her is consequently private and unsparing. "The impossibility of you reading this makes my telling it possible," Little Dog confesses.

Read the rest of my review [HERE](#) on BookBrowse! ...more

There is something magical that can happen when a poet turns to prose. This is a beautiful, raw and powerful letter of love from a son to his illiterate mother. It all comes back to love and survival but Vuong is exploring race, class, inter-generational trauma, sexuality and masculinity and it's transformative. With a poet's precision, the violence and beauty of life are rendered and the question asked is can those closest to us hear our cries to survive? A truly stunning and luminous read.

On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous

## On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous Goodreads

4.5 rounded up

I'm finding it hard to summarise my thoughts on Ocean Vuong's debut novel, perhaps because it's about so many things. I guess if I was pressed to describe *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* I'd say it's a novel about identity, love, race, language and being human.

Written as a letter to his mother who is unable read, the novel doesn't have a cohesive plot as such. Instead we learn about those closest to Vuong and his relationship with them - including an ex, Trevor; his grandmother; gr 4.5 rounded up

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Written as a letter to his mother who is unable read, the novel doesn't have a cohesive plot as such. Instead we learn about those closest to Vuong and his relationship with them - including an ex, Trevor; his grandmother; grandfather and, of course, his mother - but while learning about all these important figures in the story of his life we learn so much about the ups and downs and beauty and pain of life itself.

Luminous and unforgettable. Now I've got to go and reread his poetry...

Thank you Netgalley and Random House UK / Vintage Publishing for the advance copy, which was provided in exchange for an honest review. ...more

The ARC of this book was provided by the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

I know that Iâ€™ll probably be part of the minority here, but this book did not blow me away as I thought it would.

*On earth weâ€™re briefly gorgeous* is a heartfelt novel recollecting the story of an American-Vietnamese family which spans for three generations. The story is told from the younger family memberâ€™s perspective, the son. He writes this long letter to his illiterate mother detailing all th The ARC of this book was provided by the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

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On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous

family member's perspective, the son. He writes this long letter to his illiterate mother detailing all that happened throughout his life and also to his mother and grandmother. I didn't know Ocean Vuong as a poet so I cannot do a comparison between his prose and his poetry. But I can say that his prose feels like some kind of stream of consciousness, there's a lot of back and forth and also some random scenes.

The emotions are raw and real. For some aspects and for some people they will also probably be deeply relatable.

I think in the end my problem was his narrative. The words used were beautiful but all the back and forth didn't make me really connect to the characters.

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