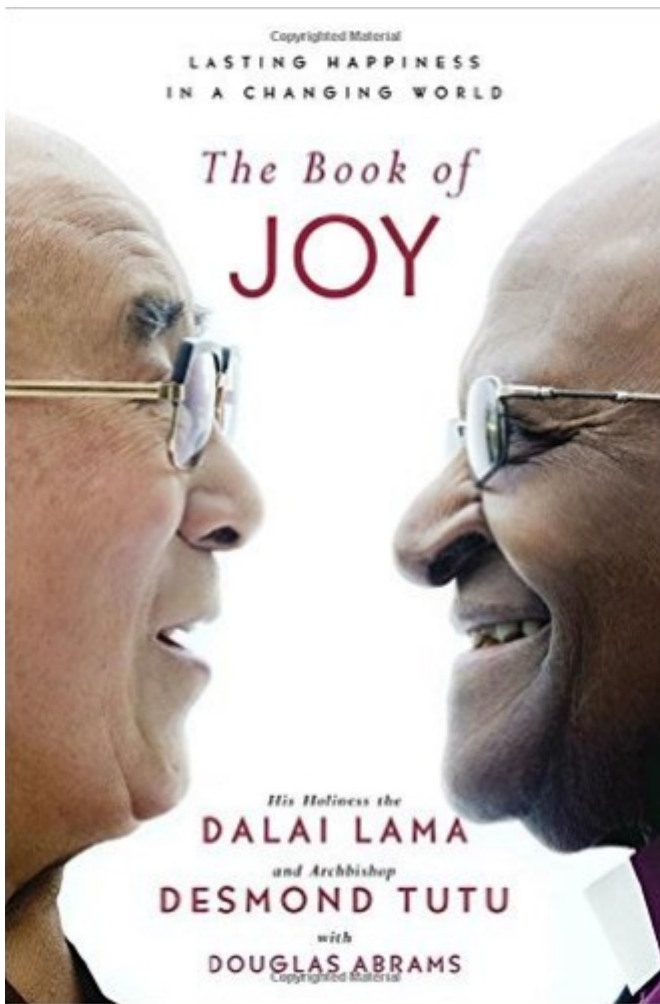


Hanging in there for love

## **Faithfulness isn't always pious or sweet.**

by [Carrie Newcomer](#) in the [December 6, 2017](#) issue

### **In Review**



### **The Book of Joy**

by the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu  
Avery

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*Becoming Wise*  
An Inquiry into  
the Mystery and  
Art of Living  
*Krista Tippett*

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER



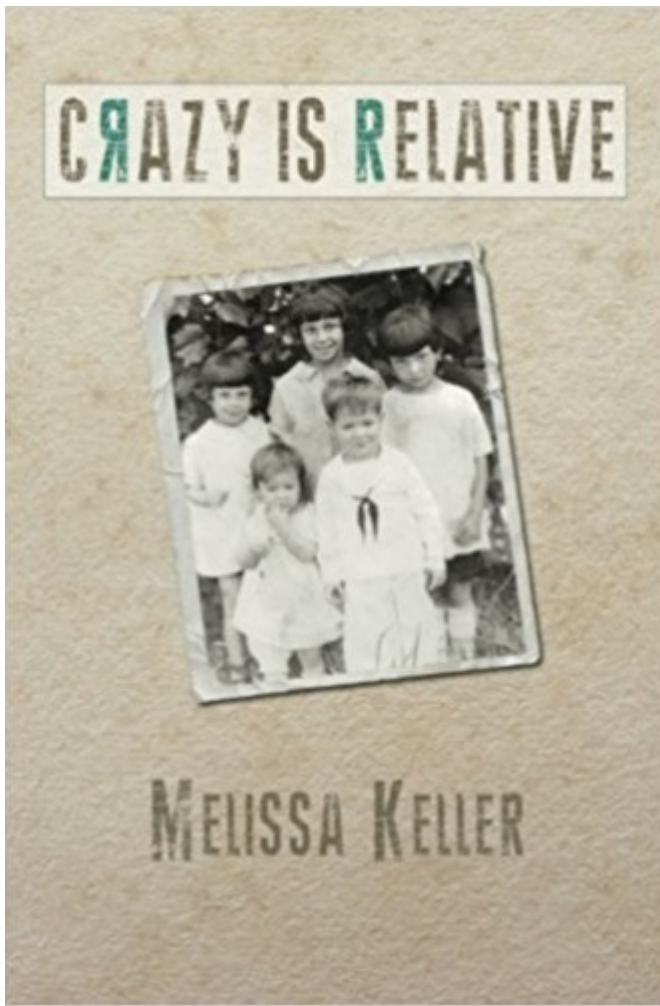
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## **Becoming Wise**

An Inquiry into the Mystery and Art of Living

by Krista Tippett

Penguin Books



## **Crazy Is Relative**

by Melissa. Keller

TMI Publishing

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MARY  
OLIVER



Devotions

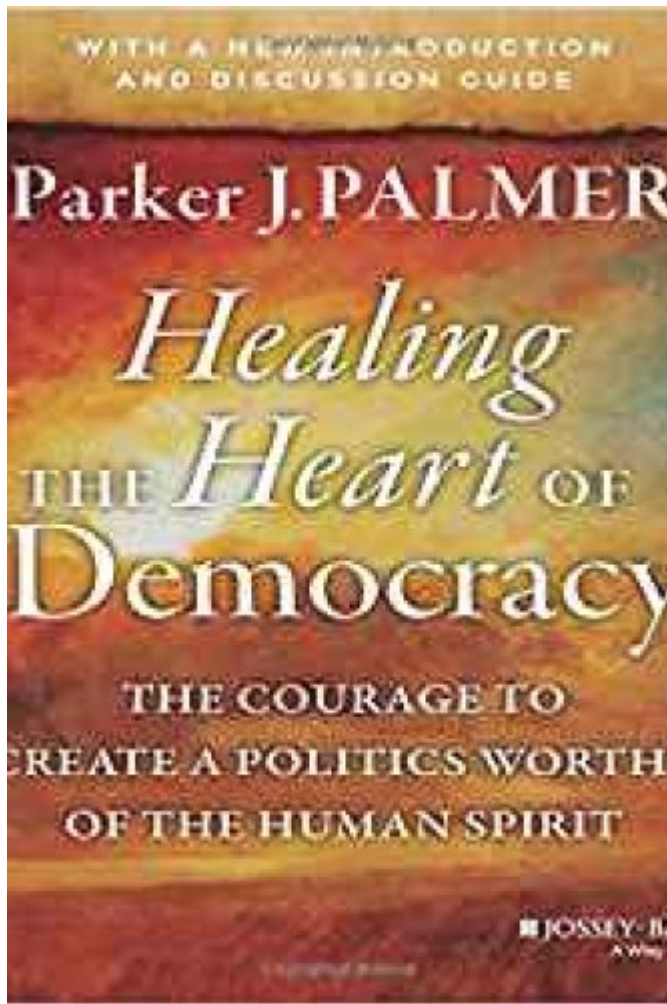
*The Selected Poems of Mary Oliver*

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**Devotions**

by Mary Oliver

Penguin Press

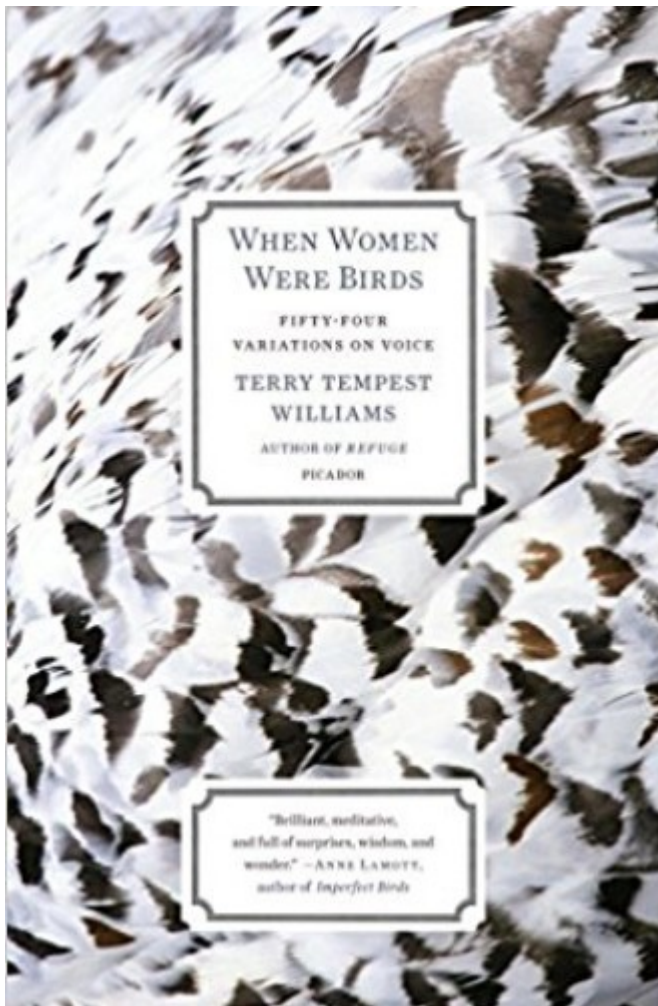


## **Healing the Heart of Democracy**

The Courage to Create a Politics Worthy of the Human Spirit

by Parker J. Palmer

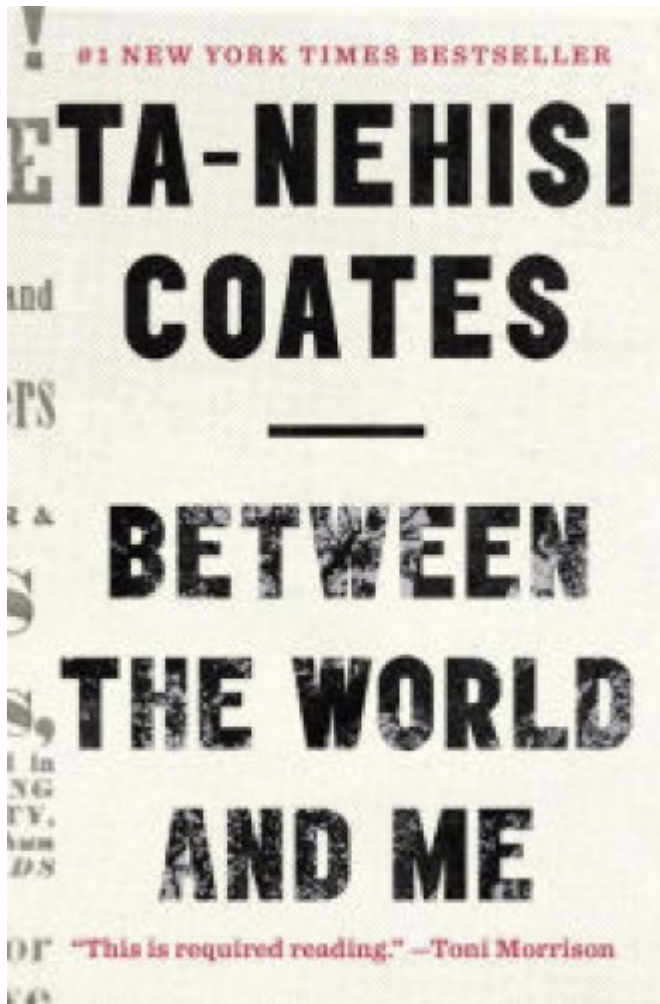
Jossey-Bass



## **When Women Were Birds**

by Terry Tempest Williams  
Picador





## **Between the World and Me**

By Ta-Nehisi Coates  
Spiegel & Grau

In a time when many of us feverishly long for a world more grounded in the best of our shared spiritual truths, *The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World* is a cool drink of water. This lovely book documents a series of conversations between His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama—spiritual leader of the Tibetan people and of Tibetan Buddhism—and Desmond Tutu, archbishop emeritus of Southern Africa, with commentary by Douglas Abrams. The conversations are visionary, wise, and filled with a profound generosity of spirit. I particularly enjoy the book's presentation of the mutual respect and abiding friendship between these two spiritual leaders—a friendship that often manifests itself in a shared rascally sense of humor. The spiritual ideas in this book are simple and direct. They encourage us to consider how generosity, hospitality, kindness, and humor can enrich us, how

openhanded service to others is the clear path to a more joyful and meaningful life, and how love is still what sets us free.

As a faithful listener of Krista Tippett's NPR program *On Being*, I have long appreciated her warmth, intellect, and passionate conversations with a delightful, eclectic series of spiritual thinkers and doers. *In Becoming Wise: An Inquiry into the Mystery and Art of Living*, Tippett weaves her own explorations into the nature of human experience with illuminating excerpts from many of those interviews. She examines the complexity and beauty contained in our differences while winnowing out the resilient seeds of our common life and our most sustaining values. She revels in the open door of a good question as she frames new approaches to the challenges of the modern world. Whenever I read, I use a notebook to record favorite quotes. At some point, I realized I was writing down whole paragraphs and pages from this book. It's a beautiful journey into the mind, heart, and body of the human condition that encourages us to listen more deeply and hope more boldly.

Melissa Keller always dreamed that when she married she would have a "Naomi and Ruth" relationship with her mother-in-law. Then she got Shirley. And Shirley got Melissa. Keller's luminous, tender, laugh-out-loud funny memoir, *Crazy Is Relative*, is a nod and testament to family with all its head-scratching, heartbreaking, and glorious quirks. Keller has beautifully written a page-turner about rolling with what life tosses at you, sometimes with grace and good humor, sometimes with frustration, sometimes with an unexpected revelation that changes what you thought was true. With a wry perceptiveness about all that is sublime and absurd, *Crazy Is Relative* captures all of this—and then, for good measure, adds a cupful of faithfulness. Not faithfulness that is pious or sugar-coated, but faithfulness that looks like hanging in there for love. Always for love. I could not put this book down.

I also greatly appreciated reading or rereading several older works this year: Mary Oliver's *Devotions* (a beautiful collection of previously published works), Parker J. Palmer's *Healing the Heart of Democracy: The Courage to Create a Politics Worthy of the Human Spirit* (a new kind of political conversation), Terry Tempest Williams's *When Women Were Birds* (haunting and stunningly written), and Ta-Nehisi Coates's *Between the World and Me* (mind-opening and clear).

Read the other 2017 Christmas picks [here](#).