



My Almost Certainly Real Imaginary Jesus

Kelly Barth

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Kelly Barth, like many American kids, went to Sunday school, sang songs about Zaccheas, and was tucked in with bedtime prayers. A typical Christian kid, that is, until she developed a searingly deep crush on another little girl playing afterhours in church, and more importantly, until Jesus—a tiny, imaginary Jesus, one that stays “safely tucked behind the baseboard or the petals of a peony”—became her invisible friend and constant companion.

Heartbreakingly honest and hilarious, *My Almost Certainly Real Imaginary Jesus* shows just how easy it can be to fall headlong into fundamentalism, venturing into the very heart of enemy territory and the church’s false promises of altar calls and sexual cures. In the spirit of Anne Lamott’s *Traveling Mercies*, this debut memoir is plainspoken, speaking with candor and insight. Barth particularly addresses the disconnect between the radical and very human Jesus of history and the church’s supernatural savior. She asks the question to *all* in the closet—both closet Christians and closet homosexuals: Which is more difficult, admitting to being Christian or admitting to being gay?

An answer is found in her own hard-won journey, a hopeful answer that is an “attempt to leave a record of the early signs of the turning and softening of a collective heart.” Giving voice to many who have searched for sanctuary in a church that has largely rejected them, this story pauses at the threshold of one of a growing number of churches which, in opening the door to her and other homosexuals, welcome Jesus back inside as well.

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