



## The Pain Tree A Short Story Collection by Olive Senior

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*"At every level of her stories' constructions, Senior works deftly ... dealing with open palms in the deep wells of remembrance, ancestry and a crosshatch of colonising scars, this fiction looks face-upwards to the mountains of multiple Jamaicas for hope, home and daily bread."* - The Trinidad Guardian

*The Pain Tree* tells stories that speak to all aspects of Jamaican life. Among the characters we hear from are: poor folk making the best of past hardships ("Coal"); rich folk plotting future selfishness ("The Goodness of My Heart"); an old man, familiar with darkness, who discovers in foreign capitalism a force even he cannot control ("Boxed-In"); a young girl, uprooted to a new country, forced to shoulder her mother's unspoken burdens in addition to her own ("Lollipop"). Bookending these are two powerful stories about the inextricability of home and history: in "The Pain Tree," the protagonist comes to realize the love she has abandoned, and the pain she has left behind; in "Flying," the lead character, searching for that which has been missing most of his life, comes home for good.

Senior navigates the hills and valleys of narrative with natural ease, interweaving thick strands of emotion and insight yet never losing sight of a story's ebb and flow. Her *Pain Tree* is an engaging, thought-provoking read that transports readers fully to another place, where the unfamiliar and exciting clash and commingle with the universal.

### The Author

Olive Senior is the prize-winning author of a dozen books of fiction, poetry and non-fiction. Her short story collection *Summer Lightning* (Longman, 1986) won the inaugural Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best Book, and her poetry collection *Over the Roofs of the World* (Insomniac, 2005) was a finalist for the 2005 Governor General's Literary Award for poetry. Born in Jamaica, she has travelled widely and now spends most of her time in Jamaica and Toronto.

### Reviews

*"[Senior's] prose is supple and ornate ... there is technique aplenty."* - *Quill and Quire*

*"[Its] voices are authentic - a variety of rhythms and cadences appear on the page - and Olive Senior pulls readers into quiet moments of transformation with considerable emotional intensity. Like Alice Munro's stories, some are remarkably complex structurally ... like Mavis Gallant's short stories, these combine the engaged eye of a resident with the distanced eye of an observer ... I read The Pain Tree twice (yes, twice!)"* - *Buried in Print*



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