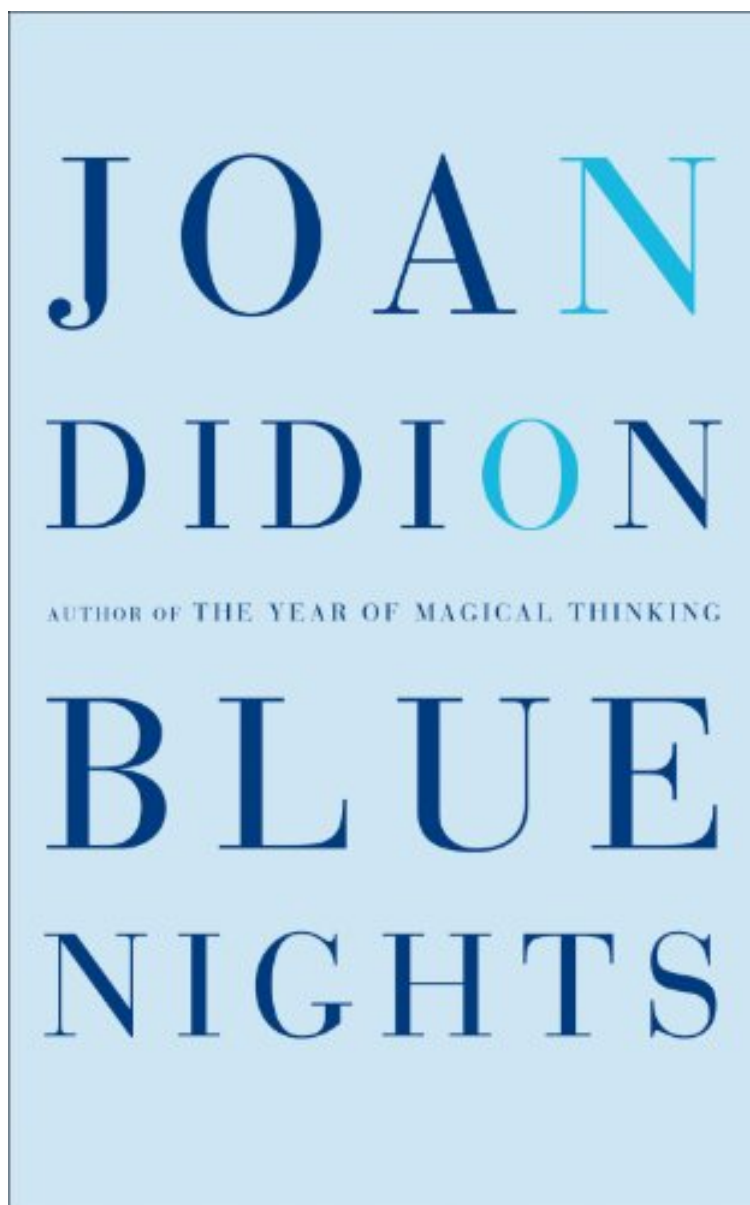


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Blue Nights



Par Joan Didion
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurFrom one of Americas greatest and most iconic writers: an honest and courageous portrait of age and motherhood.Several days before Christmas 2003, Joan Didions only daughter, Quintana, fell seriously ill. In 2010, Didion marked the sixth anniversary of her daughters death. Blue Nights is a shatteringly honest examination of Joan Didions life as a mother, a woman and a writer.Recently widowed, and becoming increasingly frail, Blue Nights is Didions attempt to understand our deepest fears, our inadequate adjustments to ageing and to put a name to what we refuse to see and as a consequence fail to face up to, this refusal even to engage in such contemplation, this failure to confront the certainties of

ageing, illness and death. This fear. This fear is tied to what we cherish most and fight to conserve, protect, and refuse to let go, for, when we are talking about mortality we are talking about our children. To face death is to let go of memory, to be bereft once more, I know what it is I am now experiencing. I know what the frailty is, I know what the fear is. The fear is not for what is lost. The fear is for what is still to be lost. You may see nothing still to be lost. Yet there is no day in her life on which I do not see her. A profound, poetic and powerful book about motherhood and the fierce way in which we continue to exalt and nurture our children, even if they only live on in memory. *Blue Nights* is an intensely personal, and yet, strangely universal account of how we love. It is both groundbreaking and a culmination of a stunning career. Extrait In certain latitudes there comes a span of time approaching and following the summer solstice, some weeks in all, when the twilights turn long and blue. This period of the blue nights does not occur in subtropical California, where I lived for much of the time I will be talking about here and where the end of daylight is fast and lost in the blaze of the dropping sun, but it does occur in New York, where I now live. You notice it first as April ends and May begins, a change in the season, not exactly a warming in fact not at all a warming yet suddenly summer seems near, a possibility, even a promise. You pass a window, you walk to Central Park, you find yourself swimming in the color blue: the actual light is blue, and over the course of an hour or so this blue deepens, becomes more intense even as it darkens and fades, approximates finally the blue of the glass on a clear day at Chartres, or that of the Cerenkov radiation thrown off by the fuel rods in the pools of nuclear reactors. The French called this time of day *l'heure bleue*. To the English it was the gloaming. The very word gloaming reverberates, echoes the gloaming, the glimmer, the glitter, the glisten, the glamour carrying in its consonants the images of houses shuttering, gardens darkening, grass-lined rivers slipping through the shadows. During the blue nights you think the end of day will never come. As the blue nights draw to a close (and they will, and they do) you experience an actual chill, an apprehension of illness, at the moment you first notice: the blue light is going, the days are already shortening, the summer is gone.

This book is called *Blue Nights* because at the time I began it I found my mind turning increasingly to illness, to the end of promise, the dwindling of the days, the inevitability of the fading, the dying of the brightness. Blue nights are the opposite of the dying of the brightness, but they are also its warning. From the Hardcover edition. *Revue de presse* A haunting memoir . . . Didion is, to my mind, the best living essayist in America . . . What appears on the surface to be an elegantly, intelligently, deeply felt, precisely written story of the loss of a beloved child is actually an elegantly, intelligently, deeply felt, precisely written glimpse into the abyss, a book that forces us to understand, to admit, that there can be no preparation for tragedy, no protection from it, and so, finally, no consolation . . . The book has . . . an incantatory quality: it is a beautiful, soaring, polyphonic eulogy, a beseeching prayer the is sung even as one knows the answer to ones plea, and that answer is: No. Cathleen Schine, *The New York Times* *Blue Nights*, though as elegantly written as one would expect, is rawer than its predecessor, the impenetrable polish of former, better days now chipped and scratched. The author as she presents herself here, aging and baffled, is defenseless against the pain of loss, not only the loss of loved ones but the loss that is yet to come: the loss, that is, of selfhood. The book will be another huge success . . . Certainly as a testament of suffering nobly borne, which is what it will be generally taken for, it is exemplary. However, it is most profound, and most provocative, at another level, the level at which the author comes fully to realize, and to face squarely, the dismaying fact that against lifes worst onslaughts nothing avails, not even art; especially not art. John Banville, *The New York Times* Book "The marvel of *Blue Nights* is that its 76-year-old, matchstick-frail author has found the strength to articulate her deepest fears which are fears we can all relate to." Heller McAlpin, *The Washington Post* The *Week* magazine's 5 Best Non-Fiction Books of 2011 The master of American prose turns her sharp eye on her own family once again in this breathtaking follow-up to *The Year of Magical Thinking*. With harrowing honesty and mesmerizing style, Didion chronicles the tragic death of her daughter, Quintana, interwoven with memories of their happier days together and Didions own meditations on aging. Malcolm Jones and Lucas Wittmann, *Newsweek* A searing memoir People Darkly riveting . . . The cumulative effect of watching her finger her recollections like beads on a rosary is unexpectedly instructive. None of us can escape death, but *Blue Nights* shows how Didion has, with the devastating force of her penetrating mind, learned to simply abide. Louisa Kamps, *Elle* A scalpel-sharp memoir of motherhood and loss . . . Now coping with not only grief and regret but also illness and age, Didion is courageous in both her candor and artistry, ensuring that this infinitely sad yet beguiling book of distilled reflections and remembrance is graceful and illuminating in its blue musings. Donna Seaman, *Booklist* "Brilliant... Nothing Didion has written since *Play It As It Lays* seems to me as right and true as *Blue Nights*. Nothing she has written seems as purposeful and

urgent to be told."Joe Woodward, Huffington Post[Didion] often finds captivating, unparalleled grooves. Her expansive thinking is particularly striking. The A. V. ClubThe reader only senses how intimately she understands her instrument. Her sentences are unquestionably taut, rhythmic and precise. Time Out NY"A searing, incisive look at grief and loss by one of the most celebrated memoirists of our time."Relevant Magazine"Both Fascinating and heartbreaking."Marie Claire