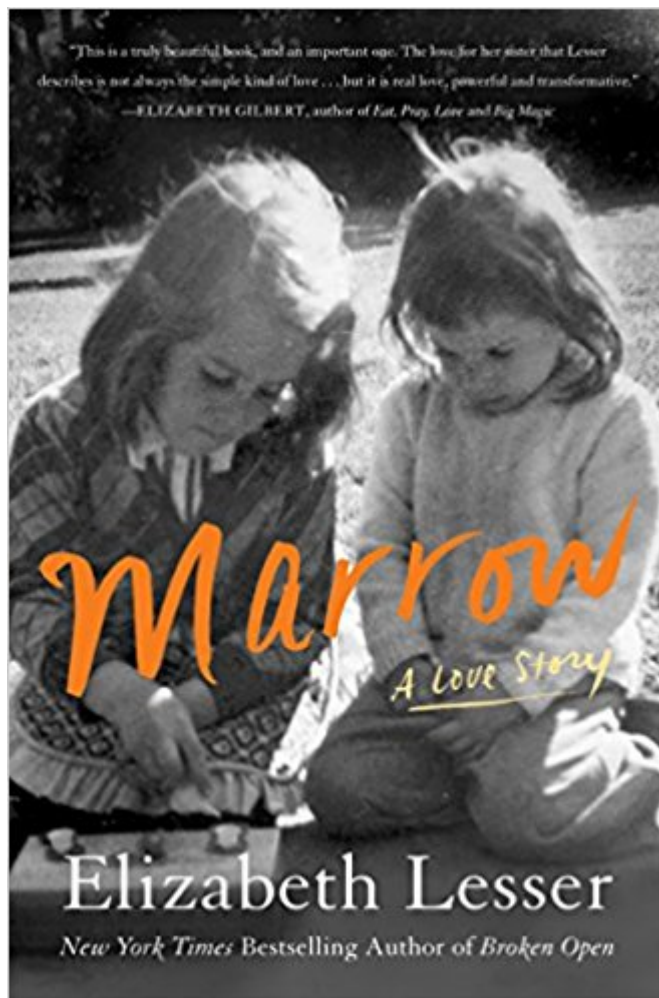


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Marrow: A Love Story



Synopsis

2017 Books for a Better Life Award Winner: Inspirational Memoir

The author of the New York Times bestseller *Broken Open* returns with a visceral and profound memoir of two sisters who, in the face of a bone marrow transplant—*one the donor and one the recipient*—begin a quest for acceptance, authenticity, and most of all, love. A mesmerizing and courageous memoir: the story of two sisters uncovering the depth of their love through the life-and-death experience of a bone marrow transplant. Throughout her life, Elizabeth Lesser has sought understanding about what it means to be true to oneself and, at the same time, truly connected to the ones we love. But when her sister Maggie needs a bone marrow transplant to save her life, and Lesser learns that she is the perfect match, she faces a far more immediate and complex question about what it really means to love—*honestly, generously, and authentically*. Hoping to give Maggie the best chance possible for a successful transplant, the sisters dig deep into the marrow of their relationship to clear a path to unconditional acceptance. They leave the bone marrow transplant up to the doctors, but take on what Lesser calls a "soul marrow transplant," examining their family history, having difficult conversations, examining old assumptions, and offering forgiveness until all that is left is love for each other—*as true selves*. Their process—*before, during, and after the transplant*—encourages them to take risks of authenticity in other aspects their lives. But life does not follow the storylines we plan for it. Maggie—*as body* is ultimately too weak to fight the relentless illness. As she and Lesser prepare for the inevitable, they grow ever closer as their shared blood cells become a symbol of the enduring bond they share. Told with suspense and humor, *Marrow* is joyous and heartbreaking, incandescent and profound. The story reveals how even our most difficult experiences can offer unexpected spiritual growth. Reflecting on the multifaceted nature of love—*love of other, love of self, love of the world*—*Marrow* is an unflinching and beautiful memoir about getting to the very center of ourselves.

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Customer Reviews

“Marrow is wise and raw, vulnerable and funny. Elizabeth’s profoundly honest journey to learn what it is to be flawed, to grow, to change, to love and to let go moved me deeply to my marrow.” (Sally Field, Academy Award-winning actress) “I thought with Marrow, Elizabeth Lesser had written a book about dying. But in fact (and miraculously) this is a book that teaches us how to live.” (Jane Fonda, actress, activist, and author of *My Life So Far*) “Every human goes through love and loss. Not everyone finds out what matters most. This book is also your story and mine. Read it and you may get to know yourself a little better.” (Deepak Chopra, MD, New York Times best-selling author of *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success* and *Super Genes*) “Marrow is a deeply brave, honest, emotional, visionary ride into the scary and liberating marrow of sisterhood. Lesser’s book is ultimately a spiritual transfusion, begging us to clean and rid ourselves of any past blood that stands in the path of love.” (Eve Ensler, New York Times best-selling author of *The Vagina Monologues* and *In the Body of the World*) “Lesser has reached into the center of her soul to write a book rich with love that is just as equally weighted by realism and as it is lightened by mysticism. It is real love: powerful and transformative. Marrow is truly a beautiful book, and an important one.” (Elizabeth Gilbert, New York Times best-selling author of *Eat, Pray, Love* and *Big Magic*) “Marrow is an unforgettable memoir about two sisters, but it’s really about all of us. It’s about the courage it takes to own our stories, look truth in the eye, and write our own bold endings. No one truth-tells with more soul and tenacity. Lesser’s courage is contagious.” (Brené Brown, Ph.D. Author of the New York Times #1 Bestseller, *Rising Strong*) “I am moved to the core by the depth and beauty of this memoir. Like *Broken Open*, this a book I will reread often as a reminder of what is really essential in life: love and spirit.” (Isabel Allende, New York Times best-selling author of *The House of the Spirits* and *The Japanese Lover*) “Marrow will take you into the depths of what it means to be DNA-linked family whose destinies were linked before birth. This beautifully written and evocative book touched me deeply; may it touch you too.” (Christiane Northrup, MD, Author of *Women’s Bodies*,

Women's Wisdom and Goddesses Never Age) "Elizabeth Lesser is a masterful storyteller and a heartfelt, eloquent, and graceful writer whose words branded themselves into my mind and pulled me along willingly, page by page. Marrow filled me with love, humility, and compassion. (Loung Ung, activist and bestselling author of *First They Killed My Father: a Daughter of Cambodia Remembers*) "Lesser, whose talent and unusual blend of heart and intelligence I've long admired, perceptively shows the soul in process. Marrow is a beautiful book that will move you but also show you how to tap into the healing richness of the soul in any serious life challenge. (Thomas Moore, author of *Care of the Soul*) "Lesser has woven a masterful tapestry of tenderness and insight from her lifelong journey with her sister Maggie. Her courage and honesty are only matched by the depth of her love. This book erases the line between writing and living to give each of us a taste of the Mystery. (Mark Nepo, author of *The One Life We're Given* and *The Book of Awakening*) "A profound and ultimately uplifting memoir of family love, fortitude, and healing. Readers will be inspired by Lesser's wise and loving approach to both life and death. (Publishers Weekly) "This profound memoir traces the love between two sisters as they travel together through thickets of despair and hope, their bond deepening beneath the bone to the soul's marrow. (Poets & Writers) "A searching, compassionate, and uplifting memoir. (Kirkus Reviews) "Lesser unlocked the goodness of a whole new kind of relationship with her dear sister and a whole new understanding of her own capacity for love and grief. (On Being) "A clear and graceful writer, Lesser... brings anecdotes from history, mythology and philosophy to bear on an essentially tragic story. (Washington Post) "Her sister Maggie needs bone marrow transplant, so Lesser willingly donates hers. But the two end up sharing something even more important. Fearlessly opening up their deepest selves ...the sisters eloquently school readers about love, self-acceptance, and the truest way to live. (People) "Marrow is a gorgeous contemplation of what it means to live and love with our whole being, regardless of the amount of chronological time we are granted. Read it and be lifted up; share it and lift up others. (The Presbyterian Outlook)

A mesmerizing and courageous memoir: The story of two sisters uncovering the depth of their love through the life-and-death experience of a bone marrow transplant Throughout her life, Elizabeth Lesser has sought understanding about what it means to be true to oneself and at the same time truly connected to the ones we love. But when her sister Maggie needs a bone marrow transplant to save her life, and Lesser learns that she is the perfect match, she faces a far more immediate and

complex question about what it really means to love—honestly, generously, and authentically. Hoping to give Maggie the best chance possible for a successful transplant, the sisters dig deep into the marrow of their relationship to clear a path to unconditional acceptance. They leave the bone marrow transplant up to the doctors but take on what Lesser calls a “soul marrow transplant”—examining their family history, having difficult conversations, upending old assumptions, and offering forgiveness, until all that is left is love for each other—their true selves. Their process—before, during, and after the transplant—encourages them to take risks of authenticity in other aspects of their lives. But Maggie’s body does not ultimately prevail in the fight against relentless illness. As she and Lesser prepare for the inevitable, they grow ever closer, their shared blood cells becoming a symbol of their enduring bond. Told with suspense and humor, *Marrow* is joyous and heartbreaking, incandescent and profound, revealing how even the most difficult experiences can offer unexpected spiritual growth. Reflecting on the multifaceted nature of love—love of other, love of self, love of the world—*Marrow* is an unflinching and beautiful memoir about getting to the very center of oneself.

Marrow is a joy to read—deeply human and accessible, and yet poignant, poetic, and profound. The book powerfully emphasizes the deep value of authenticity and reconciliation as it weaves together a beautiful story with wise and sometimes funny reflections on our shared and imperfect lives. As the story eloquently demonstrates, reconciliation with family members is hard, possible, and deeply rewarding. Elizabeth Lesser’s sketches of her remarkable sisters and parents give you a rich sense of her family’s specific strengths and weaknesses that will speak universally to anyone who has ever had a family. Yet it is her account of her biological and spiritual marrow transplant with her sister Maggie that deserves special praise for its gripping emotional honesty and intimacy. Lesser is a beautiful writer who speaks with humility and self-awareness that lets us readily walk alongside her on the journey they shared. The story of that journey evokes feelings of admiration, recognition, laughter and sadness. We see the emotional courage they each found along the way, and the beauty of the shared and separate lives they lived. As we witness the last stages of Maggie’s remarkable life, we quietly experience growing feelings of loss at its end and joy at its fulfillment. And we feel moved to reconnect more authentically with people in our own lives. Deeply touching and beautifully written, *Marrow* is a book to cherish, re-read, and give to loved ones.

I just finished reading *Marrow* yesterday morning. Thank you so much Elizabeth Lesser for Sharing Your Life and Maggie’s Life with us. And Thank You for Being Beautiful You. This year has easily

been the most difficult of my 51 years in This Body. After 27 years of marriage and 33 years together, I found myself Divorced from my Wife and Best Friend and leaving All I Know to go and pursue a new Life in Virginia. Your Book was Truly a Saving Grace. I had SO been looking forward to reading Marrow and I dove in immediately. I've never been a good reader. Except for You. As I read the book and your simple but profound Truths, the Clouds slowly began to part and I Felt a Clear and Definite Shift Beginning. A Return to Seeing things as They Are. From the 20:20 Sight of My Heart and Soul. I'm so eternally Thankful and Grateful for that. For helping me get to The Field. I'm sharing this book with everyone I know and I know after reading it that you will want to do the same. Its simple but profound wisdom is Heart and Soul opening and just a Beautiful Love Story and a story about Life and what each of us go through with those we Love and Family. And the Simple Truth that Love does come First. Always and All Ways.

This is such a good book, I'm a self help gal and really appreciate good writing. This is both. Elizabeth Lesser is sharing a very personal experience in a way that illuminates the real stuff in life and gives us all an opportunity to learn and grow. I know I will read this book a few more times to soak up the wisdom.

This book touched me so deeply!! Elizabeth Lesser is a prolific writer and I always enjoy reading her books. I am a pediatric palliative care nurse practitioner and loved this book so much because it shows the truth of what a patient and his or her family members experience. It's truly a BRUTIFUL (brutal and beautiful) experience---heart wrenching and heartwarming all at once. I really can't adequately articulate how much I loved this book!! I cried at the end of the book---and I just don't really do that much anymore. Thanks for touching me to my core, Elizabeth.P.S. I heard Elizabeth tell part of this story when I attended the Women and Power conference at Omega in September 2013. I was so happy to see that she wrote an entire book about the experience.

I am not sure how to rate this review. I truly loved some of this book and it really resonated with my inner "marrow" as the author might say. However, another maybe 60% of the book just seemed like philosophical mumbo jumbo. So I guess I would sum it up kind of like life- if you are willing to wade through the confusing, murky, not fun parts, there are some treasures you can find along the way.

What a wonderful love story about finding love of self through pain and tragedy and how that gives us the strength to live authentically. A vital reminder about forgiveness and understanding from

others points of view. A family must read.

I have met the author and have read her other books. She is an exceptional writer. I also was very good friends with her sister.....the one this book is about.

I am a nurse in a bone marrow transplant unit. This is an accurate, logical, compassionate depiction of what patients and families go through in this desperate situation. The gift for me was the explanation about the soul, the mystery of life and the importance of love through this narrative. I will recommend this book to my colleagues. It brings valuable insight to both our work and our personal journey through the miracle and the pain of life and love.

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