



# **In a Dark Wood: What Dante Taught Me About Grief, Healing, and the Mysteries of Love**

*Joseph Luzzi*

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*When you lose your whole world in a moment, where do you turn?*

On a cold November morning, Joseph Luzzi, a Dante scholar and professor at Bard College, found himself racing to the hospital—his wife, Katherine, eight-and-a-half months pregnant, had been in a horrible car accident. In one terrible instant, Luzzi became both a widower and a first-time father.

In the aftermath of unthinkable tragedy, Luzzi relied on the support of his Italian immigrant family, returning to his childhood home to grieve and care for his infant daughter. But it wasn't until he turned to *The Divine Comedy*—a poem he had devoted his life to studying and teaching—that he learned how to resurrect his life. Following the same structure as Dante's epic poem, Luzzi is shepherded out of his own "dark wood," passing through the grief-stricken Inferno, the Purgatory of healing, and ultimately stepping into the Paradise of rediscovered love.

Beautifully written, poignant, insightful, and unflinchingly honest, *In a Dark Wood* is a hybrid of heartrending memoir and a meditation on the power of great art to give us strength in our darkest moments. Drawing us into hell and back, it is Dante's journey, Joseph Luzzi's, and our very own.

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