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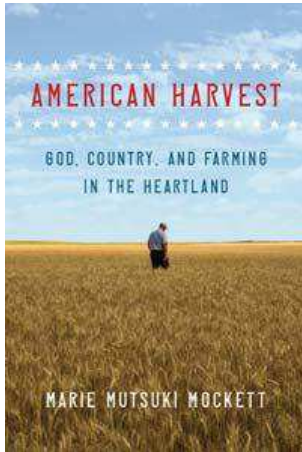
### Author Mockett to read virtually from award-winning book Oct. 21

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October 12, 2020

When **Marie Mutsuki Mockett** inherited a 7,000-acre wheat farm in Nebraska that had been in her family for over 100 years, she knew little about farming.

She grew up in Carmel, California - about as far away from Nebraska as you could get - with her father and Japanese mother. Mockett's father had been raised on the farm, but had all but abandoned it.



But after following a group of evangelical Christian wheat harvesters through the heartland of America, Mockett wrote “American Harvest: God, Country, and Farming in the Heartland.” The book received the **2020 Sister Mariella Gable Prize**, which is given each year by the College of Saint Benedict for an important work of literature published by Graywolf Press, Minneapolis.



**Marie Mutsuki Mockett**

Mockett will serve as the **Literary Arts Institute's** visiting author to CSB and Saint John's University virtually, and will give a virtual reading from her book at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 21 via **YouTube**. She will be joined by Juston Wolgemuth, a friend and figure who appears in the book, for a discussion afterwards.

The YouTube link will be available about one week before the reading.

In “American Harvest,” Mockett accompanies a group of wheat harvesters at the invitation of Eric Wolgemuth, the conservative farmer who has cut her family's fields for decades. As Mockett follows Wolgemuth's crew on the trail of ripening wheat from Texas to Idaho, they contemplate what Wolgemuth refers to as “the divide,” inadvertently peeling back layers of the American story to expose its contradictions and unhealed wounds.

She joins the crew in the fields, attends church and struggles to adapt to the rhythms of rural life, all the while continually reminded of her own status as a person who signals “not white,” but who people she encounters can't quite categorize.

“American Harvest is an extraordinary evocation of the land and a thoughtful exploration of ingrained beliefs, from evangelical skepticism of evolution to cosmopolitan assumptions about food

production and farming,” Graywolf Press said about the book. “With exquisite lyricism and humanity, this astonishing book attempts to reconcile competing versions of our national story.”

“American Harvest” was a finalist for the Lukas Prize for Nonfiction.

Mockett graduated from Columbia University with a degree in East Asian Languages and Civilizations.

Her memoir, “Where the Dead Pause and the Japanese Say Goodbye,” explores how the Japanese cope with grief and tragedy and is set against the backdrop of the 2011 earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster in Tōhoku, Japan and her family’s 350-year-old Buddhist temple.

The book was a *New York Times* Editors Choice, a Barnes and Noble Discover Pick, an Indie Next Pick, a finalist for the 2016 Pen Open Book Award, a *San Francisco Chronicle* Best Book of 2015 and a finalist for the Indies Choice Best Book for Adult Nonfiction for 2016.

Her first novel, “Picking Bones from Ash,” was shortlisted for the Saroyan International Prize for Writing, and a finalist for the Paterson Prize. Her essay, “Letter from a Japanese Crematorium” was anthologized in Norton’s Best Creative Nonfiction 3. She has written for The New York Times, Salon, National Geographic, Glamour and other publications.

Mockett received her MFA from the Bennington Writers Seminars and teaches fiction and nonfiction at the Rainier Writing Workshop in Tacoma, Washington. For the 2019-20 academic year, she was a visiting writer in the MFA program at Saint Mary’s College in Moraga, California. She lives in San Francisco.

Sister Mariella Gable, an English professor at CSB from 1928-73, was a Dante scholar, poet, editor and writer. Sister Mariella tirelessly promoted the cause of two then little-known authors, Flannery O’Connor and J.F. Powers, and introduced audiences in the United States to such Irish writers as Frank O’Connor, Seán Ó Faoláin, Mary Lavin and Bryan MacMahon through her many essays and anthologies.

The Sister Mariella Gable Award is given each year by CSB for an important work of literature published by Graywolf Press. Graywolf Press, described by Ploughshares Magazine as “arguably the best small press in the country,” and the Literary Arts Institute at CSB have formed an innovative collaboration to explore new ways of promoting the literary arts on campus, to audiences in the surrounding area and in the Twin Cities.

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