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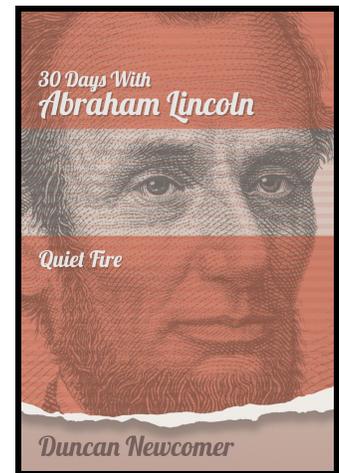
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Thirty Days With Abraham Lincoln

Quiet Fire: The Spiritual Life of Abraham Lincoln

Front Edge Publishing is proud to announce the first book in a brand new series, *Thirty Days With Abraham Lincoln: Quiet Fire* by Lincoln scholar, the Reverend Dr. Duncan Newcomer. Newcomer has hosted more than 200 episodes of the radio series *Quiet Fire: The Spiritual Life of Abraham Lincoln*. Now, 30 of his best stories provide a month of inspirational reading in a unique volume that invites us to read the stories—or to follow a simple code to hear the original broadcast each day.

“Since its beginning, radio has offered a warm medium for connecting the heart, the head, and the imagination. This delightful collection of Lincoln’s wisdom was seeded in a creative radio show, Quiet Fire. It has morphed into a daily companion for readers who connect the dots between time and space to map a new understanding of the chaotic times in which we live. Lincoln’s words resonate more urgently than ever, and Duncan has played alchemist in Quiet Fire to one of our country’s greatest souls and distilled an essence that can guide and comfort us.” **Sally Kane, CEO, National Federation of Community Broadcasters.**



“Duncan Newcomer captures Lincoln’s spirit in every one of these thirty meditations, and I love the fact that these began life on radio since I am a radio guy as well. By reading these sublime and soulful reflections, possessed—as Duncan puts it—by a quiet fire, you will find inspiration and insight that will make sense in your own life, in your own battles with fear and grief, in your own decisions over the best path to take in a certain situation, in your own yearning for deep meaning and purpose.” **From the Foreword by Peter M. Wallace, the producer and host of the nationally syndicated radio program and podcast, Day1.**

In the book, Newcomer reminds readers of Lincoln’s belief that it is “not the land that makes us American. It’s a mindset. Americans are not a race or a tribe. To Lincoln, Americans are a people who have received a great gift: a free nation with self-government.” And, *Thirty Days With Abraham Lincoln: Quiet Fire* reminds us, writes Newcomer, that “Americans did not create this free nation on their own; in Lincoln’s mind, a divine assistance made it possible.”

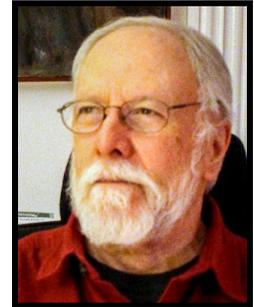
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In these short, daily stories, Newcomer touches repeatedly on the role of the divine in Lincoln's thoughts, writings and deeds. In one story, Lincoln senses "an abiding presence everywhere for good." In another, "God acting in history."

"It may just be," writes Newcomer, "that more than two centuries after the birth of Lincoln, new generations of people are ready to follow Lincoln once again—in order to find a new birth of freedom. This spirit can make the young wide awake and relight the fire inside the old."

Thirty Days With Abraham Lincoln collects Newcomer's best stories from the radio series *Quiet Fire*, presenting them both in text and with a daily link that will play that original broadcast with the click of a smartphone app.

The Rev. Dr. Duncan Newcomer is a writer, educator, pastor and Lincoln scholar who researches and hosts a weekly radio series broadcast via WERU, a community public radio station serving mid-coast Maine. That series is called *Quiet Fire: The Spiritual Life of Abraham Lincoln*. Ordained in the United Church of Christ, he also has served for many years as a licensed marriage and family counselor and psychotherapist. He earned his doctorate from the Chicago Theological Seminary in preaching and, today, is a popular teacher, educator and preacher.



Thirty Days With Abraham Lincoln ***Quiet Fire***

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Early Praise for *Thirty Days With Abraham Lincoln*:

A timely echo of Lincoln's voice—to remind us of what Americans, at their best, aspire to be.

Richard S. Slotkin, former Director of American Studies at Wesleyan University and the author of *Abe: A Novel of the Young Lincoln*

*What a powerful concept for today's readers who are so bombarded by electronic messages of all kinds from all sides: to simply take a few minutes each day to read and ponder and question and enjoy. This book, focusing so winsomely on the spiritual wisdom of the sixteenth president, will help you launch a life-changing practice you will want to continue ... I encourage you to keep an appointment with Lincoln as well for thirty days, and watch what might become of your faith, your spirit, your dedication to justice and peace, your purpose. I believe you will be amazed. **From the Foreword by Peter M. Wallace, the producer and host of the nationally syndicated radio program and podcast, "Day1" (Day1.org), an Episcopal priest, and author/editor of 12 books including *The Passionate Jesus* and *Heart and Soul: The Emotions of Jesus*.***

What Duncan Newcomer has provided in this book is not just thirty meditations upon Lincoln's life and thought, but thirty ways of being in his personal presence. Here we move in the landscapes of his childhood and youth, the fields and woods of Kentucky and Indiana, and the rivers—the Sangamon and the Illinois, the Ohio and the Mississippi—that rolled through them. We breathe his air and listen to the pitch and timbre of his voice, as if we were among those friends he led or challenged. We meditate with him on the lessons he learned as a local militia leader during the Black Hawk war or as a self-taught attorney on a rural circuit. We draw closer to him in his love of Nancy Hanks, his angel mother, and Sarah Johnston, his loving stepmother, and Ann Rutledge, the beloved of his youth. But most of all, the book seeks to put us in his presence as what Allen Guelzo famously called the Redeemer President, which is to say, in the presence of the liberator and war leader who gave our country its difficult and still incomplete second birth. ...

*This is a book of reflections, informed by a lifetime of reading and scholarship about Lincoln, and also by a lifetime of immersion in the moral and spiritual work of a counselor and clergyman. But it is also a book of meditations, of invitations to a first-person experience of communion with and through Lincoln, a kind of momentary sabbath at the heart of the everyday. It is an invitation to a habit of spiritual practice appropriate to the broken soul of this almost chosen people, as they seek to repair, and perhaps ultimately to perfect, this last best hope of earth. **From the Foreword by John Burt, the Paul E. Prosswimmer Professor of American Literature at Brandeis University. He is the author of *Lincoln's Tragic Pragmatism* (2013).***

*Duncan Newcomer gives us the gift of Abraham Lincoln's wise words and Duncan's own thoughtful reflections on a side of the great president most of us have not really seen. Read this book every day for a month, and you will not only be heartened and enlightened but also given hope for our own troubled times. **Sheryl Fullerton, retired Executive Editor for Religion & Spirituality at John Wiley & Sons, Inc.***

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From the opening dedication to his Great-Uncle James Duncan who died in the Civil War—to the closing words about the co-authors, Lincoln and Newcomer—this book is full of surprise and insight, head-scratching thoughts and images that will linger in your mind beyond the thirty days one is asked to give to its reading.

In each of the Thirty Days With Abraham Lincoln, Duncan Newcomer humbly asks his readers to contemplate a great thought from a great man, to sit staring into a Quiet Fire. Between Lincoln's wisdom and Newcomer's insights the reader will wish the month had many more days.

*Whether it is a moment on a river's shore or a speech on the floor of Congress, Newcomer immerses readers in the inner life and broader contextual times of America's greatest president, Abraham Lincoln. Each day will open a new insight and challenge you to reflect a little deeper on your life, illuminated by Lincoln's Quiet Fire. **Brian "Fox" Ellis, author, storyteller and historical re-enactor who portrays seven 'Friends of Lincoln'.***

*Abraham Lincoln spoke with deep spiritual values to a House Divided, a nation at war within itself. As Duncan Newcomer reminds us: "Lincoln became a prophet who cried out for a balance that could keep our house from dividing—that could keep our nation from collapsing." Once again, we are a nation at war within ourselves regarding what it means to be an American and questioning our most important founding values. "Abraham Lincoln is America's Great Soul" writes Newcomer. "To this day, Lincoln's spirit soars far beyond the boundaries of the United States to inspire men and women around the world." *Thirty Days With Abraham Lincoln: Quiet Fire* is a powerful and important book that takes us to the heart and soul of that spirit and inspires us to reclaim the values essential for putting our house in order once again. **Dr. John Oliver Wilson, author of The Idea of America: Our Values, Our Legacy, Our Future and Founder-Director of the Idea of America Network for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia.***

There are some who say a book can change a life. For Duncan Newcomer, it has been a person, a personage, a hero, one accessible through handed-down stories, photographs, place and interpreted histories: our own Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln is his spiritual and secular guide. As he lingered throughout his life over novels and histories and put himself in Lincoln's place, Duncan has breathed in the spirit of Lincoln. Many years ago, Duncan commissioned David K. Stone to paint a portrait of Lincoln. Then, that painting went everywhere he went, in his homes, his churches, his lecture halls. The radio talks here emerge from the love of his heart and mind for Lincoln.

*As Lincoln himself did, his words cast a healing and inspiring spell. In a time when we have all but forgotten what a leader is, what a hero is, he has helped restore to us a wise and compassionate leader. Listen to these 30 reflections one at a time, read them, or listen and read all at once. They will change your life in a subtle way, quiet you, restore calm and wisdom. But they will change you. **The Rev. Dr. Eileen Sypher, Emeritus Professor of English at George Mason University***

*These are elegant, meditative reflections inspired by America's most admired president. Duncan Newcomer's Lincoln still transcends transactional politics and regularly reminds us, by his example and words, of America's higher aspirations. **Thomas E. Cronin, President Emeritus of Whitman College and author of Imagining A Great Republic: Political Novels and the Idea of America (2018)***

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This book is a remarkable collection of daily meditations about Lincoln's spiritual yet secular side. At a time of real doubt about our nation's future, the book enlightens and reminds us of a just national cause. Lincoln understood that behind our country is not just a political arrangement, a national political economy. We have a republic, yes, but it is so bound up with a river of freedom that Lincoln knew it represented a new thing in the world. In a time of angry tweetstorms, the book reminds us of what it calls Lincoln's "quiet fire." It is a needed reminder.

Lincoln offered a dream of America, where its history would have a purpose of furthering our better selves. Lincoln's message was of redemption, ending the curse of slavery that he explained enslaved both whites and blacks to its tyranny.

This book is about his farseeing words and it also gives readers vivid pictures to ponder. Picture a tall, lanky Lincoln sitting knees pulled up to his chest, head down, balled-up on the floor of his Illinois law office. His law partner looks down and asks, "Mr. Lincoln, what are you doing?"

His answer, "I'm looking for the right word."

And as this book reminds us well, he did find them. Imagine a President minus a fleet of speechwriters actually penning the words, "The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

The book brings us the spiritual side of Lincoln, but it brings together the spiritual and the political, which was so much the essence of Lincoln—freedom's cause had to be carried out in history, in a political system. As the author notes, Lincoln found a way to do this without "ambition corrupting honor." It's a lesson in power to us.

*Want to return to a better picture of ourselves and our national identity given the grim present? This is your book—a wonderful collection of short daily essays that is just plain restorative. **William B. Bonvillian, MIT lecturer, author and former senior U.S. Senate staff advisor.***

Inspiration and delight—the two words that come to mind whenever I listen to, or think of, Duncan Newcomer's Quiet Fire broadcasts on a public radio station in Belfast, Maine. The delight arises from hearing, in each segment, about a brief incident or transitional moment in the life of Abraham Lincoln. The inspiration comes from hearing the author's incisive and acute portrayal of how Lincoln's intellect, strength and spiritual nature can illuminate not only history, but also our own current circumstance.

Oh, that we had an Abraham Lincoln today! But we do have Abraham Lincoln's words and deeds, and the author's trenchant accounting of what lay behind those words and deeds.

The essential component that makes these episodes unforgettable is the scene that the author sets in each one, in striking visual and sensory imagery. From the words in each one, a clear image of the scene begins to unfold in my imagination. As a result, the pearl of spiritual and human revelation from Lincoln's inner life takes on substance, rather than being just an interesting abstraction. As I've followed the Quiet Fire episodes, I've gradually come to see the author's approach as mirroring that of Lincoln, the inveterate story-teller, jokester, passionate speaker and writer, and spiritual presence.

And now, thanks to Front Edge Publishing, we have thirty of the best—so far—Quiet Fire episodes in book form. Each one is no more than two and a half pages, a perfect way to start the

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day. I know I'm looking forward to my next thirty days! I recommend that you consider taking this journey as well! **Jeff Byrum, radio listener, choral singer and retired IT engineer.**

I count myself fortunate that *Quiet Fire* airs on my local radio station. Each Wednesday at 7:30 a.m., I pause what I'm doing so that I can take in a perfect nugget of wisdom and thought-provoking analysis, which I digest long afterwards. Each installment is a gem; even episodes aired from the archives seem stunning relevant. Duncan Newcomer's tidy illumination of various facets of Abraham Lincoln's spiritual life is a true gift. **Chrissy Fowler, traditional dance leader and community organizer, Belfast ME.**

This addictively readable little book accomplishes two particularly timely things. It's a collection of warmly engaging, beautifully written short readings on a subject of enduring popular interest: the life of Abraham Lincoln. As a richly rewarding collection of contemplative readings, it's a small masterpiece. It's also a fascinating account for general readers of an intense, unusual, deeply personal aspect of Lincoln's character: his spiritual life.

The Rev. Dr. Duncan D. Newcomer is an accomplished Lincoln scholar as well as an ordained minister. These healing, inspiring readings are especially welcome in the gloomy present context of our nation's politics. I wholeheartedly recommend it to anyone who enjoys having uplifting short readings near at hand; to anyone interested in Abraham Lincoln; and to anyone curious about the spiritual life of the person whom many regard as the finest, noblest man who ever served us as our president. **Dave Edgerton, author of the novel, 270 East, and expert in international development.**

Duncan Newcomer understands that life has its natural rhythms. Look no further than sunrise and sunset, breath, and heartbeat. And what he recognizes is that life inevitably finds the routines that determine our daily lives.

Within this trajectory that is a life, there is an awareness or at the very least a suspicion or hope of a spiritual possibility, something that evokes both the mystery of life and the realization of our frailty and our insignificance. Spirituality, as Duncan points out, is present in many guises, but present nevertheless. Ultimately, the rituals that become the rules of routine establish the center about which our lives orbit.

In *Thirty Days With Abraham Lincoln: Quiet Fire*, Duncan Newcomer, a Lincoln scholar, proposes that the establishment of a ritual such as a daily reflection for a period of thirty days on Lincoln's words of wisdom can provide solace and comprehension, a compass in a tempestuous sea. "... a mountain of books and a mountain of a man," he writes of Lincoln. "Shall it be molehills or lofty peaks we scale? Will life be a slow hum, or will the thrill of higher octaves be struck?"

... It is a testament to Dr. Newcomer's mastery of the subject that he was able to perfectly curate the mass of Lincoln's writings into concise lessons that resonate all day. **Gary Dickson, author of An Improbable Pairing and La Poésie de la Bonne Bouffe**

Duncan Newcomer tells us that it is "not the land that makes us American. It's a mindset. Americans are not a race or a tribe. To Lincoln, Americans are a people who have received a great gift: a free nation with self-government." And, *Thirty Days With Abraham Lincoln: Quiet Fire* reminds us, writes Newcomer, that "Americans did not create this free nation on their own; in Lincoln's mind, a divine assistance made it possible."

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In fact, in so many of these fascinating affirmations, Newcomer comes back, again and again, to the role of the divine in Lincoln's thoughts, writings and deeds, an interesting lens indeed through which to view this extraordinary "man for all seasons."

Here there is "an abiding presence everywhere for good." There, "God acting in history," and, yonder, a leap of faith into the future, a reimagining of the world, an alternative future. In the dark times of the 1860s, Lincoln called on Congress to rise up and be honorable. He called on Congress and the people to rise up together: to see a future, to be lighted down with honor—to the latest generation."

"It may just be," writes Newcomer, "that more than two centuries after the birth of Lincoln, new generations of people are ready to follow an aged, transcendental idealist like Lincoln once again—in order to find a new birth of freedom ... This spirit can make the young wide awake and relight the fire inside the old, leading us down in honor—to the latest generation."

*Thirty Days With Lincoln, a compendium of Newcomer's radio talks *Quiet Fire*, is both a fascinating set of nostalgia and a clarion reminder of the enduring vitality and effectiveness of the "quiet fire" of soulfulness, patience, goodness, faith, steadfastness, honor, vision and humor in national leadership.*

*This is compelling reading whether you choose to enjoy this volume a passage a day—or consume the whole 30 days in one sitting. The reader is left with a transcendent yearning for the yonder, where indeed hope can be kindled, and an abiding reminder of our (sacred) responsibility to carry each other—down to the last generation. **Peter Stevens, former Peace Corps volunteer and educator.***

We invite you to join this "spiritual conversation" with Abraham Lincoln, surely one of our most revered presidents. As people who practice daily prayer, both morning and evening, these meditations on the spiritual life of Lincoln have special meaning. Lincoln pondered deeply the vexing issues of the day, he reflected upon them drawing on his varied experiences and the wisdom of both Shakespeare and the Bible.

Today, it seems, we are in another national crisis, one that on the external appears chaotic and divisive. Inspired by these reflections from Lincoln we can see that these vexations are an outer and visible sign of a deep disquiet in our national psyche—a conflict of values. Through Lincoln's words we can reflect on this crisis of values in our nation today and still be guided by this remarkable man.

*We have found this book a fitting addition to our own daily routine of prayer and meditation and highly commend it to you. **Ray and Patricia Estabrook, founders and directors of the Game Loft, a youth development program that has promoted Positive Youth Development for over 20 years.***

*Through the words and life of Abraham Lincoln, Duncan Newcomer conveys with passion and erudition how much the Great Emancipator has to teach us. Yes, more books have been written about Lincoln than anyone besides Jesus Christ, but from his famous "mystic chords of memory" there probably aren't that many that have coaxed such intriguing and inspiring notes. **David Margolick, author of *The Promise and the Dream: The Untold Story of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy.****