

jaded

**a poetic reckoning with
white evangelical christian indoctrination**

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Publishing books that help you heal, grow, and discover.

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dedication

to each reader-friend

picking up pieces
of life and faith

and figuring out
how to heal and
move forward

I believe in you
I'm rooting for you

we've got this

feel free to use the
white space in this book

to process your
thoughts and feelings

via words or sketches
as you read

I left lots of it
just for you

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jaded

adjective: tired, bored
or lacking enthusiasm

typically after having had
too much of something

made cynical by experience
and over it already

but also: can't
seem to let it go

welcome

hi friend

if you haven't read my book
unbelieve, you need to

if you have and liked it
but wished it would have

been a little spicier
you'll love *jaded*

if *unbelieve* made you cringe
you might want to

gently lay this book down
and back away for a bit

just so you know

jaded is
unbelieve's
bitchy
little
sister

2.5 stars!

“Minor praise for Marla Taviano
who lays it all out in her book, *unbelieve.*”

—S. R.

I was scrolling Instagram
in a dream
and saw this “review”
of my book

I was pleasantly surprised
because she’s not a fan of me
in real life

coming from her,
minor praise is
quite the compliment

scratch that

unbelieve (sort of) ended
with wings and freedom

a lilting, happy, hopeful
where do I go from here?

the plan was to move
on to a second book

working title: *more*

where I'd share my bigger,
lovelier, more expansive

thoughts about god and
spirituality and the world

but *jaded* wouldn't leave
me the hell alone

turns out (a haiku)

I have a whole lot
more to get off my chest so
here we fucking go

fuck yeah

“Sorry for all the swears
but I’m a recovering

Good Religious Girl

and it’s an important
part of my recovery!”

—**D. L. Mayfield**

even though...

I had largely untangled myself from
the lies and beliefs, they went

deep / my insides wouldn't let my
outsides write that expansive book

yet / I still had work to do to help
us get free / I long for a beautiful

world beyond white evangelical
christianity but I feel a pull to get

people out / partly because I care
about them, mostly because I care

about people they're harming / I
harmed people too and have wrongs

to right/write as I move into freedom
so here is my labor of anger and love

more is still to come

no shame / just do better

ignorant, often used as an
insult, actually means *lacking*

knowledge or awareness which
can be remedied with a desire

and effort to learn / it's a whole
other thing to be willfully stubborn

refusing to hear uncomfortable
truths / I'm not here to shame you

or even get you to *unbelieve*
exactly like I do / I want us to

think for ourselves, not just swallow
what we've been told / let's

become un-ignorant of injustice
and how we all perpetuate it

whether we mean to or not / let's
move from unknowing to knowing

then from knowing to taking
action to stop the harm

bite me

it's tempting to tamp down
my emotion

to make it more palatable
easier to swallow

don't want to come across
as angry and bitter

but I *am* those things

I'm also healing and happy
I'm a lover and a fighter

both/and

and I'm not as worried about
anyone's palate these days

you can read another poet
if you're craving something

sweet

hi, god / it's me, mara

“Don't call me Naomi,” she told them, “Call me Mara [Marla], because the Almighty has made my life very bitter.” (Ruth 1:20)

once upon a time
my mother named me
Marla Rachelle
after the bible's
Mary and Rachel

Marla means motherly
she told me, smiling

but I found out otherwise
when my ex's grandmother
bought me a photo frame
with a watercolor print

Marla in fancy font
BITTER in bold caps

I was offended then
but I'm smiling now

and taking bitter back

dumpster fire

so much for “getting things out of my
system” when shit keeps getting worse

evangelical christians cause more harm
become more toxic / more people suffer

I try to write this damn book and every
damn day another shooting, another

hard-fought-for law overturned, another
human right stripped away, another white

person bitching about a Black mermaid
jaded isn't a strong enough word for how

I feel / “I want to write rage but all that
comes is sadness,” Audre Lorde once

said / I know that sadness but today I
want to write rage and so I do

like the shape of a book

“I started teaching myself
to contort my rage
into more valuable shapes;
it doesn’t disappear that way,
just works for you
instead of against you.”

—**Nafissa Thompson-Spires**

holy anger liberates

as a white woman,
the deepest rage is
not mine to feel

*white people have long
demonized Black anger,
Cole Arthur Riley says*

*anger is never holier than
when it acts in defense
of another being's dignity*

*when righteous anger
swells, so does justice*

Black rage is a gift
I want to honor

fierce love

*While I've retreated from some
of what the church has taught—*

*women are inferior, queer people are sinners,
white people are predestined to rule the world,*

*non-Christians are doomed to hell—
I've doubled down on my belief in love.*

It's my North Star.

—Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis

clapping my hands
yes / this / is / it

love

not walking away
not anger and hate
not bitter rage

*love
period.*

but first
just a weeeeeee bit of
jadedness

about the author

Marla Taviano is into books, love, justice, globes, anti-racism, blue, gray, rainbows, and poems. She reads and writes for a living, wears her heart on her t-shirts, and is on a mission/quest/journey to live wholefarted (not a typo). She's the author of *unbelieve: poems on the journey to becoming a heretic*, and lives in South Carolina with her four freaking awesome kids. Find out more at marlataviano.com.

unbelieve

poems on the journey to becoming a heretic

Marla Taviano

“Marla's book of poetry is exactly the kind of expression that might poetically articulate your own journey.”

David Hayward (aka NakedPastor), cartoonist and author of *Flip It Like This!*

“I love Marla’s quest to absorb as much as she can about communities that are different from hers—and I am obsessed with her thoughtful book reviews. *Unbelieve* is her own story about her complicated journey with faith. I highly recommend it!”

Lisa Ling, journalist and host of CNN’s “This Is Life with Lisa Ling”

“In *unbelieve*, Marla artfully and bravely gives all of us a front row seat to her own deconstruction while also welcoming us and helping us feel safe in our own wildernesses.”

Matthew Paul Turner, NY Times bestselling author of *What Is God Like?*

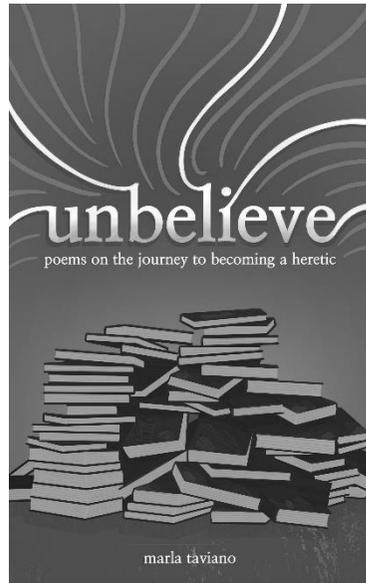
“I’m just going to read a few poems a day. That’s the lie I told myself when I started reading this poetry book. But I slurped the whole thing right up like a chai latte on a stressful day.”

Amber O’Neal Johnston, author of *A Place to Belong*

“In *unbelieve*, Marla gives you permission to ask big questions and wrestle with big truths and not just continue to settle for a safe, status quo faith. Quite simply, *unbelieve* helps you . . . believe. In a bigger, bolder, and more authentic way.”

Mandy Hale, New York Times bestselling author of *Turn Toward the Sun*

“One thing we can absolutely all agree on is that leaders in the American church have actively abused her people and have become increasingly antagonistic and isolated. Marla poetically makes the case, through humor and punchlines and snark and sharply devastating rhymes, that westernized Christian theology is to



blame. You might disagree. But I hope you would be willing to hear Marla's case."

J. S. Park, hospital chaplain and author of *The Voices We Carry*

"These poems resonated as they met me where I am and where I have been. Marla asks the questions that too many have been taught should remain unspoken, inviting us along in her journey through an ever-evolving faith."

Patricia Taylor, writer and activist

"There are books that bring you comfort, books you return to time and time again, and books that make you feel like you are not alone. Somehow, Marla Taviano accomplished all three of these feats in her collection of narrative poetry, *unbelieve*."

Cara Meredith, author of *The Color of Life*