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it is a self-fulfilling prophecy brought about by the zealot believers in the Abrahamic religions, fear carried to an illogical extreme. This epiphany made me angry. *Is This the Best God Could Do?* is also the result of that anger. However, although the topic is obviously deadly serious, I debunk the warped monotheism of the "Big Three" with humor and wit as well as reasonable, albeit edgy, argument. What follows the section in which I recount the loss of my mother (and the realization that the Abrahamic version of God has been messing with us for a couple thousand years) is part dialogue with that big guy (picture Groucho Marx as interlocutor: "Hi, God of Christianity, Sarah here. I can appreciate your dilemma, I really can. But the next time one of your angels gets out of hand, please try to take care of the problem instead of making it one of ours..."), part personal history, and part reasoned deconstruction. But the conclusion I reach about religion does not amount to an advocacy of atheism. Although the monotheistic God is discounted as a manmade thing, one used to control us, I also argue against the godless scientism of Richard Dawkins (*The God Delusion*), Sam Harris (*Letter to a Christian Nation*), and Christopher Hitchens (*God is Not Great*). In fact, I argue against this limited perception of human being as a random function of extraneous forces in favor of a more profound participation of humans in reality leading to a

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profound spiritual transformation on the part of individuals and eventually all of humanity. I also argue for a kind of pandemic version of the dramatic "wake up" effect (Eckart Tolle's concept from A New Earth) I experienced when my mother died. The human race, indeed the very planet, is going through extraordinary changes - all cause for great alarm among the monotheists as the beginning of the end. I insist in *Is This the Best God Could Do?* that, on the contrary, our situation is karmically inevitable and the dire straits in which we find ourselves an invitation to spiritual growth and thereby a renewal of civilization. I also call for those born to relative wealth, the American populace in general but also most of the Western world, to accept responsibility for charting the way forward because it is easier to evolve beyond the traditional notions of religion when one's belly is full and one is warm and dry. But *Is This the Best God Could Do?* is not just a polemic about the medieval grip of fundamentalism that holds humans back from the self awareness necessary to find a way forward through the difficulties of history to an enlightened way of life - the book also charts the path. I offer guidance to the reader for achieving the kind of awareness that allows them to hear "God's voice" and to participate in the world as an active agent instead of being just a passive believer, to understand the "magnitude of our spiritual reality." Although my book is utterly unique in its mixture of

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elements (the strident debunking of monotheism, the hopeful recognition of the "bigness" of humans as spiritual beings to stand in opposition to the "smallness" of fear and guilt, a hope-filled recipe for saving us from ourselves, and memoir...

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Rick Tramonto started as a high school dropout

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working at Wendy's; he became one of the hottest celebrity chefs in the world. Yet his rise to culinary success was marked with tragedy, loss, and abandonment. As a teenager, Rick worked to support the family when his father (who had Mob ties) went to prison. As a young adult, he struggled with a learning disability and drug addiction. Yet as a chef, he rose rapidly to culinary stardom, earning rave reviews and eventually opening the famous four-star establishment Tru. From the outside, it looked like he had everything he ever wanted; his lifelong hunger for meaning should have been more than met. But on the inside, his life and his marriage were falling apart. And then, one night, a voice on the radio changed everything. Containing recipes and photos, *Scars of a Chef* is the mesmerizing rags-to-riches memoir of one chef's journey through the highest heights and the lowest lows of the culinary world . . . and his search for something that would finally heal his wounds and sustain him through even the darkest times.

National bestseller 2017 National Book Critics Circle (NBCC) Finalist ABA Indies Introduce Winter / Spring 2017 Selection Barnes & Noble Discover Great New Writers Spring 2017 Selection ALA 2018 Notable Books Selection An intimate and poignant graphic novel portraying one family's journey from war-torn Vietnam, from debut author Thi Bui. This beautifully illustrated and emotional story is an

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