



## Mr. Blue

*Myles Connolly, John B. Breslin (Introduction), Amy Welborn (Editor)*

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J. Blue is a young man who decides to take Christianity seriously, not as a chore but as a challenge. He spends his inherited wealth almost as soon as he gets it. He lives in a packing box on a New York City rooftop. He embraces the poor as his best friends and wisest companions, distrusts the promises of technology (except for the movies), and is fascinated by anything involving the wide expanse of God's universe. He is the ultimate free spirit, it seems; but what is the source—and purpose—of his freedom? This novel about a contemporary St. Francis figure has delighted and inspired countless readers since it was first published in 1928.

## Mr. Blue Details

Date : Published February 1st 2005 by Loyola Classics (first published 1990)

ISBN : 9780829421316

Author : Myles Connolly , John B. Breslin (Introduction) , Amy Welborn (Editor)

Format : Paperback 148 pages

Genre : Fiction, Christianity, Catholic, Religion, Classics, Faith

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## From Reader Review Mr. Blue for online ebook

### Stephanie says

My edition of this book by Myles Connolly is a really cute, small paperback, and delightful to carry around, but the contents disappointed me. I think it was the loneliness of the main character that left me empty.

He is a young man in New England who takes the commands of Jesus seriously, to sell everything you have and give to the poor, to forsake the normal path of security and comfort for a greater purpose. You sense that he is well-liked by everyone, but you hardly ever meet any of the people that he helps. Most of the author's encounters with him involve long speeches from Blue about his wild and unrealistic dreams, the kind of talk you may have heard from people in your own life who are mentally unstable.

The introduction to this book compares Mr. Blue to Jay Gatsby. The narrator can't agree with Blue's lifestyle, and he doesn't always understand him, but he still always admires him. To me, Blue just seems incomplete.

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### Lawrence Lam says

This is a great novella that has unfortunately been out of print for some time, despite the back cover saying it has been in print for decades. Its audience has likely been fenced in to "Catholic" audiences but it is not a Catholic book. This has appeal to anyone who enjoys the natural beauty of the world and delights in regular human experience. Blue personifies the ideal optimist, smiling and extracting childlike joy from the mundane to the absurd. Connolly has given us a reminder of how much fun life can still be in spite of our hardships and sufferings and personifies in Blue a credible example of one who can embrace even those things. In this book there are beautiful viewpoints worth revisiting today, 86 years since publication...presented teasingly from a distance, as even the narrator distances himself from Blue's opinions, but the radicalism of such crazy ideas just might be the sanest pill for today's culture.

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### Lenny says

A story about a selfless man with a beautiful outlook on God, love, and the world around us. A lot could be learned from a man named Blue.

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### Kathi says

I found this small inspirational book when I was a teenager, and never forgot Mr. Blue, the eccentric main character who lived his short life marveling at the universe and praising the God who made it. His extreme acts made him memorable—from living on top of a early skyscraper in a tent so he was better able to appreciate the stars, to embracing “Lady Poverty” to better practice seeing God in the poor. His charismatic

personality and his charity endeared him to others; God's goodness was visible on his face and in his actions.

The book was written in 1928, but Blue's wonder is timeless.

Mr. Blue is smitten by movies, the new medium at the time. In my favorite chapter, he narrates an idea that he has for a movie plot. Mr. Blue's story about the last priest on earth was the part of the book I most vividly remember, even after many decades. It was that plot that I recalled to my husband one day not long ago, and was my reminiscence that led my husband to find and order the book (it was not even found on Amazon!) as a sweet and most thoughtful surprise for me.

I will not spoil this subplot of Mr. Blue by telling that story, but I will publicly thank my husband for following Mr. Blue's example of spreading joy to others. Thank you, Myles Connelly. Thank you, my dear Bill.

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### **Dannica Zulestin says**

This is really really boring.

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### **Liz says**

It is a toss-up for me between 3 and 4 stars...but closer to 4 since Mr. Blue did strike a cord in me. I should have guessed that this was a religious book because it is a Loyola Classic and was part of Em's high school reading...but I didn't realize it when I first picked up the book off of Em's floor to read. It did help with my own journey into the Catholic faith - since the journey will always be continuous. I don't think that I could follow the footsteps of Mr. Blue - live in poverty and find happiness. I would, however, like to emulate Mr. Blue in finding happiness in whatever situation I am in. I was particularly drawn in with Mr. Blue's proposed tombstone inscription -

*Never was there a worse sinner,  
And never was God kinder to one.*

*I have read that somewhere before...so is this where it came from first? Either way, the premise of the book was extremely thought-provoking and helpful to me personally.*

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### **booklady says**

Written in the 1920's, published at the same time as Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby, Mr. Blue is the anti-thesis of Jay Gatsby, the self-made millionaire. He is a radical Christian, a modern day, St. Francis of Assisi, who has decided to live the Gospel message come what may. His story is devotedly told by his staunch friend, the book's narrator, who I found to be as sympathetic a character in his way as Blue was in his. We don't learn very much about either of the book's only real personalities, but somehow it doesn't seem to matter. Belief is what matters. Belief and how we act on those beliefs.

Blue believes money is to be spent or given away immediately. His attitude toward finances and social responsibility would recognize a kindred spirit in St. Basil the Great when he wrote: "The bread you do not

use is the bread of the hungry. The garment hanging in your wardrobe is the garment of the person who is naked. The shoes you do not wear are the shoes of the one who is barefoot. The money you keep locked away is the money of the poor. The acts of charity you do not perform are the injustices you commit."

As it was, the narrator admired his friend but didn't quite understand him. Throughout the book, he kept urging J. Blue (blue-jay? as in the bird?) to take care of himself, look ahead, save, and plan for contingencies ... all sound advice for anyone else.

A memorable read.

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### **Anita says**

Not for everyone, but very thought-provoking in a philosophical kind of way... It will stay with me.

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### **Alex Stroshine says**

A slim, Chestertonesque novella that reads like an investigative hagiography of a modern day saint.

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### **Earl says**

I consider this as a sort-of parting gift by the late great Fr. Archie Intengan, S.J., and perhaps one of the finest 20th century Christian novels I have read. It tells the story of what the Christian faith truly is, and why this is all the more important in our contemporary situation.

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### **Mary Crotty says**

odd book

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### **Julie Failla Earhart says**

This year, 2018, my New Year's resolution was to pick twelve of the books that have been loitering on my bookshelves and actually read them. For February, I picked a short novel that has been print continuously since it was originally published in 1928.

While it's considered Catholic fiction, I remember distinctly why I initially purchased it: the following sentence was on the back cover from John B. Breslin's introduction: "Blue...was a uniquely American personality. As Myles Connolly wrote him, J. Blue was the man whom the ambitious Jay Gatsby might have become had he steered by a higher truth than the sound of money in Daisy Buchanan's voice." A novel that compares its protagonist to Fitzgerald's Gatsby? I had to have it.

Breslin's introduction makes many comparisons between Gatsby and Blue. He also called Blue a modern St. Francis of Assissi, which I didn't seem at all.

Basically Blue is a free spirit, one who is more interested in God and the Earth than in following a strict set of guidelines that the human race places upon itself. He takes a vow of poverty and chases that vow with abandon.

I'm not sure that I truly understand Connolly's message, but it's good little read. Mr. Blue receives 3 out of 5 stars in Julie's world.

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### **Dorinda says**

Controversial Pres. of NYU swears every one of his students and colleagues must read this. Only one of his many categorical pronouncements. Tried to read it.....MEH! Not interesting enough to hold interest and too self-consciously pretentious to struggle with. Favorable comparisons with The Great Gatsby merely delusions of ransom reviewers. Gatsby has basis to sue.

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### **Audrey says**

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### **Christian Engler says**

Mr. Blue, a Catholic novella, by Myles Connolly, is a very unique work of fiction and one that I thoroughly found pleasure in, because it portrays the adherence of faith and doctrine not as an obligation that bit-by-bit brings about mental burdensome affliction, but rather, it is presented as an exciting challenge that goes against the current social and political tide of what popular culture deems to be in vogue or the right way. It is a short work of nervy fiction that not only goes against the flow of what is thought to be acceptable in an age of thoughtless go-and-get-it modernism, but it addresses the core of ourselves and the very small universe which we temporarily occupy. Through Mr. Blue's religious unearthing of the one-and-only ultimate truth-Holy Church-a new freedom is thus discovered and hence, fully embraced, which in turn redefines life and living-with all its tumultuous struggles and assorted agonies, as something mysteriously beautiful and special. Mr. Blue was written in 1928, three years after F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote the incomparable literary classic, The Great Gatsby. And the parallels, especially in characterization, between the two works are indeed quite amazing, and yet, the novella Mr. Blue, never received the full global attention that The Great Gatsby eventually did. It remained in the shadows, like a relic, whose message was deemed only for an antiquated bygone period. Perhaps it was so, because it conveyed a message that no one wanted to hear or were too afraid to live out. For gluttony and self-indulgence, if allowed to happen, can indeed destroy the God-given gifts of character, ethics and religious and moral conviction, et cetera, et cetera. In Connolly's novel, Mr. Blue is an aberration, an anomaly for the bulk of those who bear witness to what he utters and lives out: goodness, sacrifices, an uncompromising faith, the gem of suffering and full understanding that there is one who knows, one who went before all of us. And Mr. Blue is blatant in his expression of that fact, that Jesus the Christ: "...humanized infinitude...When God became man, he made you and me and the rest of us pretty important people. He not only redeemed us, he saved us from the terrible burden of infinity." Pg. 30.

Perhaps the greatest example of living out the religious life as a lay person was the very author himself-Myles Connolly-a former Hollywood screenwriter who never deviated from the gem of Truth within himself. In a way, he held up the mirror to ourselves and showed us that indeed, we, all humanity, in a compliance to that joyful and painful Truth, have a little of Mr. Blue in us, too; we're just not aware of it yet.

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