

Donald Richard "Don" DeLillo (born November 20, 1936) is an American novelist, playwright and essayist. His works have covered subjects as diverse as television, nuclear war, sports, the complexities of language, performance art, the Cold War, mathematics, the advent of the digital age, politics, economics, and global terrorism. Initially a well-regarded cult writer, the publication in 1985 of *White Noise* brought him widespread recognition, and was followed in 1988 by *Libra*, a bestseller. DeLillo has twice been a Pulitzer Prize for Fiction finalist (for *Mao II* in 1992 and for *Underworld* in 1998), won the PEN/Faulkner Award for *Mao II* in 1992 (receiving a further PEN/Faulkner Award nomination for *The Angel Esmeralda* in 2012), was granted the PEN/Saul Bellow Award for Achievement in American Fiction in 2010, and won the inaugural Library of Congress Prize for American Fiction in 2013.

DeLillo has described his fiction as being concerned with "living in dangerous times", and in a 2005 interview declared, "Writers must oppose systems. It's important to write against power, corporations, the state, and the whole system of consumption and of debilitating entertainments. I think writers, by nature, must oppose things, oppose whatever power tries to impose on us."

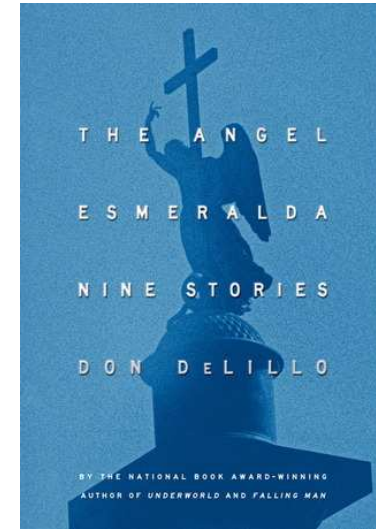
DeLillo's first collection of short stories, *The Angel Esmeralda: Nine Stories*, covering short stories published between 1979 and 2011, was published in November 2011.

It's impossible not to get a sense of déjà vu reading "The Angel Esmeralda," the first book of short stories in Don DeLillo's 40-year career. The themes here are echoes — of one another, yes, but even more, of the issues that have defined DeLillo's writing since his first novel, "Americana," came out in 1971.

There's the distance and immediacy of the image, which motivates the title story, as well as the taut, unsettling "Baader-Meinhof," perhaps the best piece in the collection, built around the German painter Gerhard Richter's "October 18, 1977" sequence at New York's Museum of Modern Art. There's the necessary contrivance of narrative, which is both insufficient and our only solace, an idea that infuses both "The Starveling" and "Midnight in Dostoevsky." There's the influence of media and terror, those twin axes of modern power, which fuel "Hammer and Sickle," where, among other things, a wife sends increasingly radical messages to her incarcerated husband through the medium of television. It's as if in putting together "The Angel Esmeralda" DeLillo had decided to construct a primer, a guidebook to his literary life.

And yet, as is often the case with DeLillo, "The Angel Esmeralda" is not so easy to categorize. Its nine stories span more than three decades and encompass much of the author's short fiction, making this in its way the least constructed of his books. DeLillo highlights that by organizing the collection chronologically, beginning with 1979's "Creation" and ending with "The Starveling".

ENGLISH READING CLUB



The Angel esmeralda by *Don delillo*

December the 10th at 6:30 pm

Hosted by Ruth Cory



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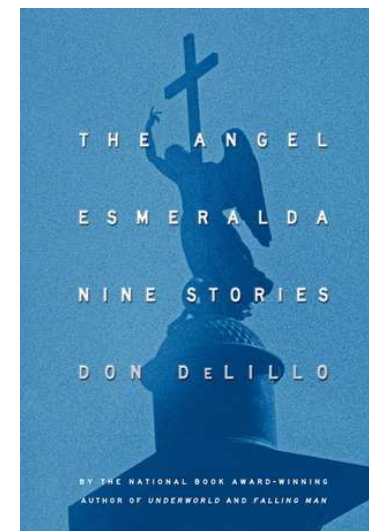
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