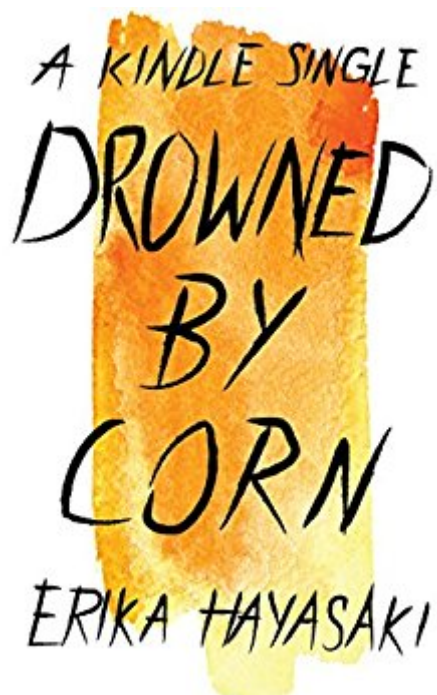




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# Drowned By Corn (Kindle Single)



## Synopsis

One morning in 2010, four teenage boys in a small Illinois town went to work in a grain bin—one of those towering silver cylinders that contain corn and dominate the midwestern landscape. But something went terribly wrong. By day's end, some would be alive. Others would not. A close-knit community would be devastated, forced to endure. This gripping true story centers on what happened to one courageous and flawed young man who survived, and how his life quickly spiraled out of control in the next two years. It is a story about love, unbreakable friendship, and "king" corn. "There are some forty-five thousand items in the average American supermarket and more than a quarter of them now contain corn," writes Michael Pollan in *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. But as international dependence on the highly subsidized crop for cattle feed, corn syrup and ethanol has surged—so have deaths by corn. Based on three years of reporting and interviews with the people involved and thousands of pages of court documents, transcripts, police reports, journalist Erika Hayasaki brings to life (in narrative nonfiction-style) this world of people who risk and sometimes lose their lives for this powerful commodity. Hayasaki, a former national correspondent for the Los Angeles Times, is the author of *The Death Class: A True Story About Life* (Simon & Schuster 2014), as well as the Kindle Single, *Dead or Alive* (2012). She is an assistant professor in the Literary Journalism Program at the University of California, Irvine, and a regular contributor to *Newsweek* and *The Atlantic*. \*Cover design by Kristen Radtke

Praise for *DROWNED BY CORN*:  
THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE: "The descriptions of the accident are chilling: a blow-by-blow account of the grain pulling the young men under and the dramatic rescue of Will, who survived after being buried past his chest. The piece follows Will as his grief sends him into a downward spiral. "Drowned by Corn" is a gripping narrative of tenderness and horror, friendship and loss." — Megan Kirby  
SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE: "Erika Hayasaki's suspenseful account of the deaths of Paco and Wyatt and the harrowing rescue of Will is the stuff of nightmares. But what elevates this fine work of investigative journalism is her portrayal of Will in the aftermath: his survival guilt, his struggle with alcohol and drugs, his strained relationships and his eventual discovery of a way to endure his and his town's unspeakable losses." — Porter Shreve

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This piece was riveting, suspenseful, and thoughtful. The narrative of what happened to the young men was framed with Michael Pollan's writing on the corn industry. I didn't realize all the ways my life is touched by corn and was not aware, until reading this, of the personal costs of this to others. It's an amazing piece of reporting and writing.

This was so well written. I assume the author had to research this topic, but she really covered it all. I know from first-hand experience that it is common practice on farms to have very young children shouldering responsible jobs. I recall my nine-year old cousin driving a pickup load of grain to the elevator. This story drives home the point that children cannot always take care of themselves and they make immature judgement calls that can often turn bad. These boys certainly did and all of the them were affected for the rest of their lives by the deaths of the two boys in the corn silo. I appreciated that the author covered the aftermath, the legal cases and their resolutions.

Read this a while ago but it has stayed with me .Such a tragic unnecessary loss of human life. No one should ever be able to step one foot in a silo under such unsafe conditions.For me it was a page turner.

Harrowing short story. Good read.

I was given a Fire HD7 for a belated Christmas gift. I immediately fired it up and eagerly browsed

the kindle ebooks. I read the plot and saw that it was only 76 pages long. Knowing this would be a quick read, I purchased it and it turned out to be a page-turner. Hayasaki gives us a deep look into a person's life after enduring a traumatic experience that left him witness to two of his friends' deaths. It effectively spreads awareness of the dangers of farming.

Details were excellent. It was difficult to read the opening accident scene having been in a bin in my own experiences, but the detail description was great for those not understanding the situation. I appreciated the detail explanation of how corn is so important to our society and educating everyone on all the items where corn is found. True stories are my favorite stories to read. This was close to home and relevant to my everyday life.

Very nice story but tragic. Will increase awareness of this problem as I did not realize the dangers. As a child, I think a lot of us that grew up on farms played in grain bins.

Very Interesting reading. Impossible to imagine the horrors these youngsters suffered being swallowed and drowned by the corn. Not a easy place to work for anybody inside a grain silo or anything like it as in a water tower. And worse the memories it left on the survivors throughout the remainder of their life. A good novel for all! R.Laverdiere, Florida.

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