

**Creator:** Paul Williams

**Title:** Promise Me This

**Publisher:** Chicago Quarterly Review (2012)

**Title:** Promise Me This

**Publisher:** New Contrast South African Literacy Journal (2012)

**Title:** There is No Hereafter

**Publisher:** Meanjin (2012)

## Research Background

JM Coetzee suggests that significant fiction needs to 'dissect the myths of our society' rather than 'reinforce those myths' (Coetzee 1988: 3). This story dissects the myth of a 'respectable' funeral enforced by a traditional Catholic family. A dying father questions his religious upbringing, and his son promises to not give him a Catholic funeral, yet the family overrides his wishes and (in the son's eyes) betrays his new convictions.

## Research Contribution

The story contributes to the scholarship of creative writing by positioning itself as a palimpsest of previous works through its intertextual allusions. The story explores a man's struggle to free himself from a religious worldview by juxtaposing references to Dylan Thomas's 'Do not go Gentle into the Dark Night' and the father's naive reading of Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* which destabilises his traditional worldview.

## Research Significance

The story was published in three international journals in the same year, first in the prestigious *Chicago Quarterly Review* (as 'Promise Me This'), then in *Meanjin*, the leading Australian literary journal (under the title 'There is no Hereafter'), and in *New Contrast*, the leading South African literary journal. The story is part of the author's growing work that employs the notion of palimpsest and intertextuality as a narrative technique, and will be included in a short story anthology, *The Art of Losing* (Bridge House Publishing, London) in 2018.

## Reference

Coetzee, J.M. 1988 'The Novel Today', *Upstream* 6, 1 (Summer): 2-5