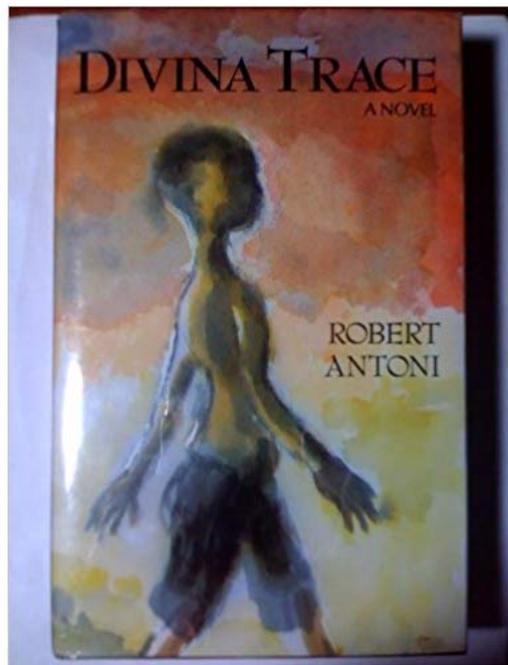


## Divina Trace *by* Robert Antoni



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**Author:** Robert Antoni

**Book title:** Divina Trace

**Pages:** 436

**Publisher:** Overlook Books; First Edition edition  
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Seven versions of a Caribbean legend--each told in a different dialect--describe the birth of a mysterious frogchild to Magdalena Divina, a patron saint worshipped by Hindu and Muslim Indians, Africans, and Catholics



## Reviews of the *Divina Trace* by Robert Antoni

lubov

Divina Trace is simply one of the greatest works of literature every written. Following in the tradition of Garcia Marquez, Joyce, and Faulkner, Antoni writes himself into the literary canon with reckless abandon. Antoni's work is, in a sense, self-congratulatory (to put it mildly) as he takes prose to its absolute upper limits. Antoni's ego is well deserved, however, as his complicated prose (while maybe hard to follow) is absolutely beautiful. Read the book, engage with it, and live within it. You won't be disappointed.

SiIent

Just finished this wonderful first novel. Apparently it took him 10 years to write it, from roughly 1982-3 (started when he must have been about 25) to 1991. It is an incredible (that is to say, almost unbelievable) story, but handled exceptionally well. It's really a Rashomon-effect series of tales of the same basic story, told over many generations, from different belief systems, and personal viewpoints, both literal and figurative. If there's any criticism it might lie in the thick Caribbean patois that it is generally written in throughout, but having lived in the Caribbean for many years, I didn't mind at all, and when you fall into the cadence, you might also find it very refreshing. Simply put, once you figure out that "potcakes" are dogs, and "crapo" means frog, then it's pretty easy sailing. But the story itself is both convoluted and fascinating, centering around the birth of a strange child, his unusually beautiful, inescapably alluring, and then, forcibly blessed mother, Magdalena, and members of the Domingo family on the fictitious island of Corpus Christi. There's lots of mysticism, and magic, and gobs of superstitious and incestuous immorality (especially by the tall, dark and self-centered bad-ass Barto Domingo), but it's really the story of Magdalena and her mysterious frog-baby ("crapo-child") that drives the narratives. It is a wonderful book, and I highly recommend it. One interesting fact with this edition... there was a single mirror-sheen page in the middle of the book; I couldn't understand why, until you get to that part and the author, Antoni, goes on a long diatribe about monkeys and men... then, just briefly he asks, look in the mirror and see the monkey you are. It worked for me. Congratulations, Mr. Antoni, this one was well-played. I'll be sure to look up your other stuff when I get a chance.

Nagis

Robert Antoni's novel presents the history of the Caribbean through the lives of his characters who are flawed and wonderful.

The humor and satire in *Divina Trace* rise to Olympian proportions as the characters try to piece together the legend of Magdalena and the "crappo child." Antoni possesses a comic gift that is matched in *My Grandmother's Erotic Tales*--another MUST read.

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