



The Struggle with the Angel: Delacroix, Jacob, and the God of Good and Evil

Jean-Paul Kauffmann

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In *The Struggle with the Angel*, Jean-Paul Kauffmann -- a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle award for his *The Black Room at Longwood* -- wrestles with good and evil. His muse is *The Struggle of Jacob with the Angel*, a Delacroix painting in Paris's Saint-Sulpice. In this painting, Delacroix, a narrative artist of the mid 19th century, portrayed one of the most enigmatic episodes in Genesis. It was said to be his "spiritual testimony," and it took him eight years to complete. In the manner of an intuitive detective, Kauffmann investigates the painting and the church that houses it. Stroke by meticulous stroke, he uncovers the painting's deeper meaning — the struggle with God — for the artist and for himself, as he attempts to put his own troubled past into perspective. Color photos and illustrations accompany this meditation on humanity's struggles with God.

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