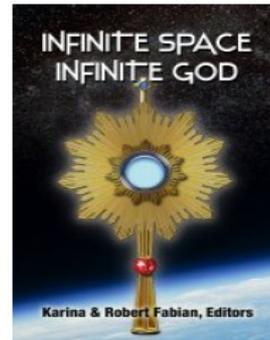


# AN INTERVIEW WITH KARINA FABIAN

By:

**TANNIA E. ORTIZ-LOPES**

(<http://timewithtannia.tripod.com>)



**About the Author:** Karina L. Fabian is a homeschooling mother of four who writes articles and craft books to bring in extra money and fiction to placate the many characters in her head who insist on having their stories told. Her short stories have appeared in magazines like *Eternal Night* and in the award-winning Christian SF anthology, *Leaps of Faith*, which she edited with her husband, Rob. A cradle Catholic and SF geek, she's had a great time thinking about the future of the Catholic Church for this anthology. She finds collaborating with her husband, whether about children, stories, or anthologies, extremely romantic. Learn more about her at [www.fabianspace.com](http://www.fabianspace.com)

## 1) Tell us about yourself:

I'm a writer, mother of four, and wife to Lt. Col Rob Fabian who is also the co-editor of *Infinite Space, Infinite God (ISIG)*. I'm a native of Colorado. I graduated with university honors from Colorado State University in Ft. Collins. I spent four years in the Air Force as an Intelligence Officer. I transferred into the Reserves when my first child was born and got out of the military completely after the birth of my third child. I've written for everything from newspaper articles to radio show research files to fiction stories both short and novel length. I have several blogs and websites. In general, I will try my writing skills at just about anything—including developing a Catholic cartoon, “St. Peter’s Cove”. My greater achievement in life will be to see my children grow up with a strong sense of morality, happy and be productive members of society!

I've had an absolutely stellar year with the publishing of *Infinite Space, Infinite God* and all the doors it's opened for me in my career. I've become part of the Lost Genre guild and the Muse Online Writers just to mention a few. I am the president of the Catholic Writers' Guild ('cause I'm a good nag.) I just finished a fantasy comedy novel that I'll be sending to a publisher in a few weeks. (I'm writing this interview in July, btw.) Don't know if I'll ever be famous and I'm sure I won't ever be rich, but if I can keep writing and publishing, I'll be happy in my career.

We're moving to Minot AFB, North Dakota in August, where Rob is taking command of a missile maintenance squadron. It's a dream job for him, and we've heard nothing but good about the base, so we're excited.

**2) You home schooled your children for five years. What are the benefits of it? What are the cons of it?**

I learned about home schooling while doing an article for "Wyoming Catholic". I loved the idea that the kids could go at their own rate of learning rather than be forced into a norm. Even more, I loved how close the families were, particularly the siblings. My older children went to public school in Colorado, but when we moved to Rhode Island, we decided to give home schooling a try. At the time, we had two in second grade, a toddler and an infant. We loved it! We had a great time and did a lot of fun things. When we moved to Virginia, we decided to keep home schooling. At the time, I was sure I'd home school through high school. Home schooling for us was a lifestyle choice. However, as our family dynamics changed, I began to feel that it was no longer the best idea for our family. Thus, we decided with our move to Minot, ND, to enter the younger children into the base elementary school and the older ones into Catholic middle school. It was a hard choice to make, but now we're excited about it.

My kids play together more and better than any set of public schooled siblings I've ever known—especially considering their age differences. Steven, who turns 14 in late August, and Liam, 7, still play together. Steven can come to Liam's level, but more often, Liam moves up—both in imagination play and in playing strategy games. Amber can play the boy games and the boys play the girl games, though as they get older, there's less of that. They still fight like cats and dogs at times, but overall, I'm glad we home schooled that long.

Home schooling gave us some needed flexibility to accommodate each child's special needs. I worked with Steven's dyslexia and his bad handwriting. Amber enjoyed her freedom to pursue her artistic abilities and sometimes was part of her assignment. Alex was a year ahead in math as was Liam so I worked with her slowly on reading without it penalizing his other work. We decided for our last month in Virginia to visit all the amazing historical sites in our area.

The kids have been able to find a few really good friends without being hindered by peer pressure in regards to age, gender or status. We also know who they're hanging out with, which is a big deal.

However, home schooling takes a lot of work and effort on behalf of the mother, and a lot of discipline. The house has people in it 24-7, so it never stays clean, nor does Mom get a lot of uninterrupted time. If Mom is not a strict disciplinarian (and unfortunately, I am not), the kids can start to develop a slack attitude toward their studies, especially in things that seem trivial or hard. Meeting and making friends takes more effort on behalf of the moms, since the kids don't get to see each other every day on the bus or in class. And there are times and topics when someone else can reach a child better than a parent—after all, how many of us have that special teacher who turned us onto a subject? Those are the reasons we're trying public and Catholic schooling next year. We may go back to home schooling later, but even if we don't, we built some strong foundations to grow on.

**3) How much influence have your years of service in the air force had on the stories you write?**

They haven't. I joined the Air Force because I enjoyed ROTC in high school, got a scholarship from the Air Force, and because I thought it'd be a good job while I wrote. However, it didn't turn out to be the right job for me. I was mentally and emotionally exhausted at the end of the day. Being married to a military man was a far better way to go! Even when I do have military people or situations in a story, I'm more likely to be influenced by my husband's military experience and input than my past experience.

**4) In the year 1996 your attitude toward writing changed from hobby to profession. What motivated this change? What type of genre did you write before and after that turning point in your life?**

When I left the active duty Air Force and went into the Reserves in 1995, just before Steven was born, I decided this was the right time to become a professional writer. I wrote a couple of stories but no publishing since we were living in Japan and the Internet was expensive. So I concentrated my time and efforts on my Reserve duty, as a choir director for the base parish, hung out with friends, traveled in Japan, played with my son Steven and even found time to enlarge our family with my daughter, Amber.

In 1996, we moved to Cheyenne, WY and found myself without a job, no sitter, and with two children to take of. I didn't have the means nor the time to get too involved in church activities. Nevertheless, I was back in the US and was able to start submitting to paying markets—a big advantage! Paying-market opportunities motivated me. The turning point for me, as far as fiction, came while I was reading a Harry Turtledove novel as the kids were watching Cinderella for the umpteenth time. I remember thinking if he, as a history professor, could also be a major novelist, why couldn't I? I was a stay-home mom with kids who often entertained themselves. I could get at least a few stories written. Lent was coming up, and in addition to giving up something, I usually take up something. I gave up reading and took up writing and prayed that God would direct me. A couple of weeks later, I called "Wyoming Catholic" on a whim and got my first paying job doing news stories. Soon, I was doing interviews and features for three local magazines, including a nice glossy called "Wyoming."

I wrote fiction as well. My first story, "Cinders", was a catharsis for the sickly sweet Disney movie. Once we'd found a sitter, Rob and I went on a couple of dates, and while talking about the future of Catholics in space, we came up with the Order of Our Lady of the Rescue, space-faring nuns who specialize in search and rescue operations. I discovered the Internet—AOL writing groups at first, which were fun but mostly a waste of time. Then around 1999, I discovered the "Catholic Writers Online," which is where I got my first two book contracts: a craft book for the *Little Flowers Girls Club* and the e-book *Leaps of Faith*, which had one of our first Rescue Sisters stories.

Since then, I've written just about anything: inspirational pieces for religious magazines, informational and how-to articles on parenting and pregnancy for local and national magazines, news stories for local newspapers and radio; and fiction whenever a story or a character has driven me to let them be. Sometimes an idea just comes along and you just have to work with it for the sake of your mental health! When I wanted to try my hand at a novel, I started with an idea I had but felt I could not write the character as she wanted to be

presented. I put it aside and dusted off the manuscript I wrote in college and totally revised it. I'm shopping that trilogy now. Other times, I get inspired by a magazine or an anthology seeking specific submissions; my "Dragon Eye, PI", stories stemmed from a call for submissions to "Firestorm of Dragons" (coming 2008 from Double Dragon Press) and the first story in that universe is in it.

**5) You have written children's books, fantasy, fiction, mysteries, non-fiction, and Sci-fi. Which one of these genres do you think describes you better?**

Sci-fi/fantasy. That's mainly where my imagination lies and where I hope to make a name. The other venues happen as I get an idea or opportunity--or I come across a paying market that interests me.

**6) Have you written secular stories? If yes, what genre and where were they published?**

Most of my non-fiction work is secular. You'll find my articles in "Pregnancy," "Babyzone," and other parenting and pregnancy magazines of varying size, as well as a couple of stories in the radio show "The Osgood Files."

In fiction, I have several stories. "Ergo" (published in *Eternal Night*) was about a computer trying to decide if it was sentient and conducted an experiment similar to Descartes: isolating itself from all input to see if it would survive. However, it also isolated a human as its "control" subject. "Accidental Undeath" (published in *Samsara*) is about a vampire trucker who hits a girl with his truck by accident. While she dies, he agonizes over whether or not to turn her. "Cinders" (unpublished) is what would have happened if Cinderella had stayed out after midnight. My stories about Witch Androvitch (unpublished) are about a wacky witch who breaks kids of their bad habits—not bathing, nose picking and the like.

My *Miscra Trilogy* which I'm shopping around is secular, though there is some discussion about God and religion. Also, *Infinite Space, Infinite God* is intended as a "secular" work, like Tor's anthology *Sacred Visions*.

I've only written three specific religious stories: one was in answer to one of those Born-Again Christian stories in which the character lived a good life but never said he believed in Jesus, so he goes to Hell. Mine was about a guy who said he believed, but lived a Pharisee life. When he died, he found out words are not a magic formula. The other two are St. Gillian of L5-universe stories. (St. Gillian is an imaginary saint. One is in *Hereditas Magazine* and the other, "These Three," is in *Infinite Space, Infinite God*.)

**7) Do you consider Catholic Sci-Fi another venue for evangelization?**

I don't write to evangelize, and I can't stand fiction that is written specifically to evangelize. So I'm probably the wrong person to answer this question. Further, I do not want a sub-genre of Catholic Sci-Fi. I want to see mainstream fiction, specially the SF/fantasy genre that I write in, to be more open to expressing issues of faith. I want those faith issues to be part of the characters, part of the plot, and part of the story. I want faith to be recognized in fiction, not fiction to evangelize faith.

I write science fiction and fantasy because that's where my mind takes me. I write about Catholic characters and with a Catholic world view because that's who I am, but even more, because that's what the story or the characters want. If the character isn't Catholic or Christian or even Deist, I don't force it upon them.

## 8) Where does your inspiration come from?

Can I answer with the cliché “everywhere”? Here are some examples:

*Infinite Space, Infinite God*: "These Three" was inspired by a Leslie Fish's song in which an injured person had to crawl across his ship to activate the distress beacon, and the ghosts of astronauts help him. In ours, the stakes are a little higher, the journey worse, and the help comes from the Blessed Gillian of L5. "Our Daily Bread" was inspired by a curiosity about asteroid mining, conflicts between religions in space, and my father, Deacon Steven Lumbert. "Interstellar Calling" was inspired by a similar story by Kathryn Lively, which got sold elsewhere just as we'd gotten a contract at Twilight Times.

"Dragon Eye, PI": I read a call for submissions for an anthology about dragons, so Rob and I racked our brains for something new to do with dragons. We were watching “Whose Line is it Anyway?” a comedy improvisation show. They were doing skit satirizing the film noir style--you, know, like Casablanca, Maltese Falcon and the like? Thus Vern was born: a down-and-out dragon bespelled by St. George to serve humans and forced to eek out a living as a private detective. That story comes out in “Firestorm of Dragons” next year and is the basis for several stories, a serial and a novel I hope to also have out next year. Check him out at [www.freewebs.com/dragoneyepi](http://www.freewebs.com/dragoneyepi).

*The Miscria Trilogy* (unpublished): I wrote a sweet but (in retrospect) dull fantasy about a really cool psychic kid who ends up on another planet. It never sold and 15 years later, I brushed it off and decided to give the main character some real problems—so many, he ended up in an insane asylum. Oops. So the story became a trilogy, with the first book to get him out of the asylum and onto the alien world; the second for falling in love and adapting to his new world (and convincing himself he's not insane after all), and the third using his psychic abilities to save his new home world from destruction.

Witch Androvitch stories (unpublished): We were on the El in Chicago and the kids were restless, so I offered to tell stories. Since one of our friend's sons was picking his nose, I told a story about a little boy who picked his brains out and Witch Androvitch came in with enchanted salad tongs and rolled them back in.

## 9) You and your husband Rob have edited two religious sci-fi books: *Infinite Space, Infinite God (ISIG)* and *Leaps of Faith*. Both titles create curiosity and a desire to get to know more. Tell us about these books. Where can our readers purchase them?

*Infinite Space, Infinite God* is thought-provoking science fiction with a Catholic twist. Each of the 15 stories explores a classic science fiction theme but with a Catholic world view. Within its pages, you'll see the Church struggle to evangelize to aliens and lost human colonies and to determine the soul-status of genetically modified humans, genetically-

designed chimeras, and clones made from the Martian sand. You'll read the adventures of religious orders devoted to protecting interstellar travelers and inner-city priests, and experience how technical advances allow monks to live in solitude on the Moon and help one criminal learn the true meaning of Confession. With fantastic stories from new angles and introductions exploring the issues and the Church's current thinking, *Infinite Space, Infinite God* will spark discussion among Catholic and non-Catholics alike.

*Infinite Space, Infinite God* is available as an e-book from fiction wise or the publisher at [www.twilighttimesbooks.com](http://www.twilighttimesbooks.com). After August 15, the print version is available through order at your favorite bookstore, amazon.com, Barnes and Noble online or directly from the publisher at [www.twilighttimesbooks.com](http://www.twilighttimesbooks.com).

*Leaps of Faith* is similar, but with a more "generic" Christian world view. The stories cover several faiths and everything from interspecies marriage to re-writing the 10 Commandments to finding a "saint gene." It's searching for a print home (we have a strong possibility), but I have some copies of the electronic version left for sale.

**10) Your book cover illustrates God present in the Blessed Sacrament between heaven and earth above the clouds. What inspired this book cover?**

We wanted the cover to reflect the unique nature of the stories—that they are more than just great sci-fi, but also Catholic in theme. However, we had very little to do with the cover design. Kurt Ozinga came up with it based on some suggestions we made and a list of keywords (space, Catholic, stars, monstrosity, crucifix, saints, planets, and the like.) We may have a different cover for the hardback; but we do love this cover. It's simple, but very majestic.

**11) What message do you want to convey to the buyer and the reader?**

Religion has a real place in our future. That's all. Other than that, enjoy the book, tell your friends and be on the lookout for *Infinite Space, Infinite God II*!

**12) *Infinite Space, Infinite God* won the EPPIE award for best electronically published science fiction of 2006, and *Leaps of Faith* was a finalist in 2003. What is EPPIE? How are the winners chosen?**

Quoted directly from their website: <http://www.epicauthors.org/eppies.html> "The EPPIE Awards have been given annually since the first EPIC conference to recognize outstanding achievement in e-publishing. The categories are judged by members of EPIC, all published authors. After the first round of judging, the works of the finalists are sent to another panel of judges, and winners in all eighteen categories are selected. The winners are announced at the EPIC conference's gala award ceremony at the annual EPICon Convention." *Leaps of Faith* was a finalist for best anthology. This year, *Infinite Space, Infinite God (ISIG)* competed against 30 other books in the science fiction category. As an anthology with a religious theme, we thought we were a long shot, but believed in the quality of the stories and the universal appeal. We were so excited that the EPIC judges loved it, too.

**13) You have three distinctive and interesting websites. Give us a small description of each one of them.**

a) *Infinite Space, Infinite God* - <http://isigsf.tripod.com>: This is the dedicated site for the book events, interviews, story synopses, reviews, and the book trailers. It's there for the curious to learn more about *ISIG* and for the press to get information for articles.

b) FabianSpace - [www.fabianspace.com](http://www.fabianspace.com): My personal website. It has my blog, a list of my works, descriptions of the universes I play in, a media room for the press, and my chat room FabChat, where I host live chats with authors and their fans every Thursday night.

c) Dragon Eye, PI - <http://www.freewebs.com/dragoneyepi/index.htm>: The universe of Dragon Eye, PI. Usually, this is written in the character of Vern, the cynical "Sam Spade" of the dragon world. It has a list of stories, the link to the serial mystery I'm writing for *The Prairie Dawn*, and Vern's own blog. I've got dragon and St. George stories and art from others, too.

**14) Chat rooms are becoming the most cost-effective marketing tool for authors. Do you have a chat room? If yes, how often do you have a guest author? How can I author contact you to be considered for a chat?**

FabChat meets every Thursday night 8:00 -10:00 pm EST. After September 13, the time moves from 9:00-11:00 pm EST. It's a live chat for authors of any genre (except erotica or "hate" books), and other members of the publishing industry. It's a moderated chat and I usually produce a transcript for the authors and fans afterwards. We've had a great time so far, learning about books, publishing, audio books, promotions and the writing life. Anyone interested can contact me via my website [www.fabianspace.com](http://www.fabianspace.com). Click on FabChat and check the schedule. I'm booked for the rest of the year--Nov 15 is my last FabChat before I close up for the holidays. I'll resume again in January.

**15) Virtual Book Tours (VBT)-- What are the advantages and the disadvantages of them? Do you recommend them?**

I like virtual book tours, and if you want to learn more about what they are, check out my Virtual Book Tour Primer on my website ([www.fabianspace.com](http://www.fabianspace.com).) In a nutshell, you arrange to be on blogs and pod casts, etc., promoting your book.

The advantages are flexibility, ease of scheduling, ability to reach a larger audience and low cost. Another thing I love is that I can take time with my answers. In December's tour, I had a lot of really philosophical questions about *Infinite Space, Infinite God (ISIG)* and the interaction of science fiction and religion. In a live interview, I would have been caught flat-footed. With a Virtual Book Tour, I can go research answers, talk to friends and most of all, take time to think.

Disadvantages; it could be time consuming seeking out blogs, inquire about possibilities and availabilities on websites, do follow-ups, fill out the interviews, and have them completed in a manner that is satisfactory to the interviewer.

**16) Groups and associations are great networking tools; you belong to Catholic's Writers Guild. What is the purpose of this group? How can other Catholic writers join the group? Do you have a website?**

The Catholic Writers' Guild was formed just last October, but our goal is to be the Science Fiction Writers' Association (SFWA) or Romance Writers' Association (RWA) of Catholic writing. We want to support each other, provide opportunities, offer advice and make a place where writers with a love for God and the Catholic Church can get together. So far, we've had wonderful success: two authors have met to translate one's catechetical puppet shows; three (including me) are working on a Catholic animated show; people have had opportunities to display their books at conferences that they aren't attending but another guild member was; and we've got market alerts and a tips blog in the making, as well as a possibility for a Catholic radio presence. We're also playing a big role in the first Catholic Authors Conference in May 2008.

What we need are active members willing to help out as well as enjoy these activities. We're looking for writers who are Catholic and editors, publishers, and illustrators who are at least supportive of Catholic writers. Dues are \$24 per year, payable April-April and pro-rated. To join, start by subscribing to the Yahoo group at catholicwritersguild-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. In the Files section, you'll find instructions on what to do next.

**17) Are you working on new projects?**

Ai yi yi! Am I ever:

We're negotiating for *Infinite Space*, *Infinite God II* with Twilight Times Books.

I'm finishing the novelization of *Dragon Eye*, *PI: Magic*, *Mensa and Mayhem*. I have an interested publisher, but no contract yet.

I'm working with the very talented Lisa Mladinich and Ann Lewis on *St. Peter's Cove*, a cartoon Catholic version of the Veggie Tales. It teaches children about the Catholic Church. Like the Veggie Tales, it's a fun, quirky cartoon but with animals (not vegetables) doing skits based on different religious stories based on the many wonderful aspects of Catholicism—rosaries, saints, sacraments and, of course, Bible stories.

Rob and I are working on our first Rescue Sisters novel, *Discovery*. A disillusioned grad student at a commercially-sponsored university discovers a crashed alien ship in the Kuiper belt, and the university's sponsor sends out a team to investigate and salvage the wreckage. Three sisters of Our Order of the Lady of the Rescue are hired to oversee safety of the expedition, but end up dealing with other issues as well. Meanwhile, Sister Rita faces other problems. She had transferred orders to join Our Lady of the Rescue to escape a romantic love that threatened her vows. Millions of miles from Earth, James still plagues her mind, but at least she was free from his presence—until she finds he's part of the crew. Can her faith withstand temptation? And what discoveries will she make aboard a crashed alien spaceship?

I still need to finish my third book in the *Miscria Trilogy*.

Finally, I'm shopping several manuscripts around and building a few MySpace sites for my books (*Infinite Space*, *Infinite God (ISIG)* and *Dragon Eye* in particular.)

**18) Any words of advice for new writers?**

Have a day job to support you in your writing—but not one that exhausts you so you can't write. Expect rejection; 9.5 times out of 10, it's business, not personal. Keep submitting and keep writing. If you're published, network and market; you can no longer rely on your publisher to do it for you. Pray for guidance in your work.

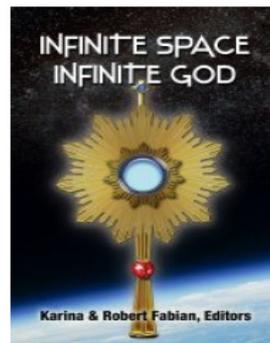


**Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopés**, author of *The Window to my soul*, *My Walk with Jesus* (ISBN 0975393359; 2004 Tate Publishing; [www.tatepublishing.com](http://www.tatepublishing.com)).

Author's websites: <http://www.myspace.com/tanniaortizlopes> and <http://timewithtannia.tripod.com>. The author also has a blog at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

# Book Review

## Infinite Space, Infinite God



*Infinite Space, Infinite God*, edited by Karina and Rob Fabian, is an anthology of Sci-Fi stories organized in seven chapters. Each chapter begins with an explanation of some Catholic issues with a brief summary of the stories and how the characters dealt with them. It is proper to mention that the reader needs to be prepared for a ride into a world beyond their imagination lead by a group of very crafty writers. Many of the stories have open ends, which makes me think the authors have a sequel or a series of stories in mind.

I have chosen several stories to tease your curiosity and encourage you to get a copy of the book, buckle up, and enjoy these adventures through space as you have never done before! To learn about the rest, go to <http://isigsf.tripod.com>.

The book cover, created by Kurt Ozinga, merged the concept of infinity between space and God above all. God is inside the Blessed Sacrament, a Catholic form of worship. The cover gives the reader a hint of the book's content: Sci-Fi with a Catholic twist.

The story "Our Daily Bread," written by the Fabians reflects the book cover. In this story the authors explained in a profound and eloquent manner the Catholic practice of Eucharist Adoration and the blessing that comes with this practice. The miracle of the multiplication of the breads and fishes is harmoniously woven in the story. It illustrates without a doubt the meaning of the phrase, "God always provides."

Some stories incorporate futuristics and modern themes, such as human cloning, artificially creating humans for spare parts, colonization, missionary work, and government attitude toward religion. "Hopkins's Well" is a fine example of military duty, teletransporting, and religious colonies on Mars. The open end makes you hope for a sequel since it gives you a glance at the after life with the Sci-Fi twist!

What do a “construct,” an artificial, a thief, and a detective priest as your ultimate P.I. have in common? A “construct” and an “artificial” are half-animal and half-human creatures created by human. Curious about it? Then I suggest you jump start your space travel experience and ride aboard the *Coventry* and join the crew on an intense mystery story on the “Mask of the Ferret.”

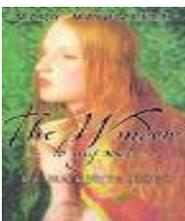
The consequences of religious fanaticism is the prime theme of the stories: The “Host of the Envoy” and “Understanding.” On the “Host of the Envoy,” Luke, the main character, finds himself lost in space and encounters a colony ship struggling to return home. He is perceived by the religious leader of the ship as the “One” who will save them and lead them back to Earth. The leader must be ready for a big surprise and at the end the reader will want more, more, and more!

“Understanding” takes you to the mind of a killer who is desperate and soaked with confusion and anger toward the Church, which once alienated him because he is genetically engineered. The end proclaims God’s unconditional love for all of us.

“Canticle of the Wolf ” is a twist to the status-quo of the big-cunning wolf story. It takes you to a world of time travel and anamorphosis.

The last two stories are a combination of spy work and conviction. “Far Traveler” shows how science experiments could end surprisingly if conducted by the wrong person. How far are we as a society are willing to go in the name of science? That question is properly addressed and answered in this story.

“A Cruel and Unusual Punishment” is the crowned jewel of the book. It is an up-to-date approach to the traditional station of the cross to reflect over the concept of death from the point of view of an inmate on death row. The story begins with the First Station and a quote from other writers and philosophers as a prelude to each situation on this story. It shows how personal conviction, sin, repentance, and redemption are all annulled by God’s unconditional love and forgiveness.



**Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopés**, author of *The Window to my soul, My Walk with Jesus* (ISBN 0975393359; 2004 Tate Publishing; [www.tatepublishing.com](http://www.tatepublishing.com)).

Author’s websites: <http://www.myspace.com/tanniaortizlopes> and <http://timewithtannia.tripod.com>. The author also has a blog at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)