



The Tears of Eros

Georges Bataille

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Tears of Eros is the culmination of Georges Bataille's inquiries into the relationship between violence and the sacred. Taking up such figures as Giles de Rais, Erzebet Bathory, the Marquis de Sade, El Greco, Gustave Moreau, Andre Breton, Voodoo practitioners, and Chinese torture victims, Bataille reveals their common obsession: death.

This essay, illustrated with artwork from every era, was developed out of ideas explored in *Erotism: Death and Sexuality* and *Prehistoric Painting: Lascaux or the Birth of Art*. In it Bataille examines death—the "little death" that follows sexual climax, the proximate death in sadomasochistic practices, and death as part of religious ritual and sacrifice.

Georges Bataille was born in Billom, France, in 1897. He was a librarian by profession. Also a philosopher, novelist, and critic he was founder of the College of Sociology. In 1959, Bataille began *Tears of Eros*, and it was completed in 1961, his final work. Bataille died in 1962.

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