



# Architecture by Moonlight: Rebuilding Haiti, Redrafting a Life

*Paul E. Fallon*

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When a natural disaster strikes, one imposing obstacle always impedes recovery: the need to rebuild. Not just homes, schools, and other buildings but also lives must be reconstructed. Yet amid the horror there is also the opportunity to build back better, to create more resilient buildings and deeper human connections.

After Haiti's 2010 earthquake, architect Paul E. Fallon wanted to help rebuild the magic island he had visited the previous summer. Over the next three years, he made seventeen trips to design and supervise construction of an orphanage and a school in Grand Goâve. In the process, he confronted the challenges of building in a country with sparse materials and with laborers predisposed toward magic over physics.

*Architecture by Moonlight* is about much more than construction, however. Readers will also experience the many relationships Fallon developed as he balanced the contradictory demands of a boisterous American family constructing a memorial for their deceased daughter and Evangelical missionaries more interested in saving souls than filling bellies. Dieunison, a wily Haitian orphan, captured Fallon's heart and exemplifies both Haiti's tragedy and its indomitable spirit.

Fallon's personal experience is an eloquent tale of "an ensemble of incomplete people struggling in a land of great trial and great promise, trying to better understand their place on Earth." He reveals how, when seemingly different people come together, we succeed by seeking our commonality. *Architecture by Moonlight* illustrates our strength to rise above disaster and celebrate recovery, perseverance, and humanity.

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