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*Marla Carlson*

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The urgent debate about torture in public discourse of the twenty-first century thrusts pain into the foreground while research in neuroscience is transforming our understanding of this fundamental human experience. In late-medieval France, a country devastated by the Black Death, torn by civil strife, and strained by the Hundred Year's War with England, the notion of pain shifted within the conceptual frameworks provided by theology and medicine. *Performing Bodies in Pain* analyzes the cultural work of spectacular suffering during these two periods, reading recent dramatizations of torture and performances of self-mutilating conceptual art against late-medieval saint plays.

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