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Posted on 18 August 2017 By John Cheever

Here Are Sixty One Stories That Chronicle The Lives Of What Has Been Called The Greatest Generation From The Early Wonder And Disillusionment Of City Life In The Enormous Radio To The Surprising Discoveries And Common Mysteries Of Suburbia In The Housebreaker Of Shady Hill And The Swimmer, Cheever Tells Us Everything We Need To Know About The Pain And Sweetness Of Life Goodbye, My Brother The Common Day The Enormous Radio O City Of Broken Dreams The Hartleys The Sutton Place Story The Summer Farmer Torch Song The Pot Of Gold Clancy In The Tower Of Babel Christmas Is A Sad Season For The Poor The Season Of Divorce The Chaste Clarissa The Cure The Superintendent The Children The Sorrows Of Gin O Youth And Beauty The Day The Pig Fell Into The Well The Five Forty Eight Just One Time The Housebreaker Of Shady Hill The Bus To St James S The Worm In The Apple The Trouble Of Marcie Flint The Bella Lingua The Wrysons The Country Husband The Duchess The Scarlet Moving Van Just Tell Me Who It Was Brimmer The Golden Age The Lowboy The Music Teacher A Woman Without A Country The Death Of Justina Clementina Boy In Rome A Miscellany Of Characters That Will Not Appear The Chimera The Seaside Houses The Angel Of The Bridge The Brigadier And The Golf Widow A Vision Of The World Reunion An Educated American Woman Metamorphoses Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin Montraldo The Ocean Marito In Citt The Geometry Of Love The Swimmer The World Of Apples Another Story Percy The Fourth Alarm Artemis, The Honest Well Digger

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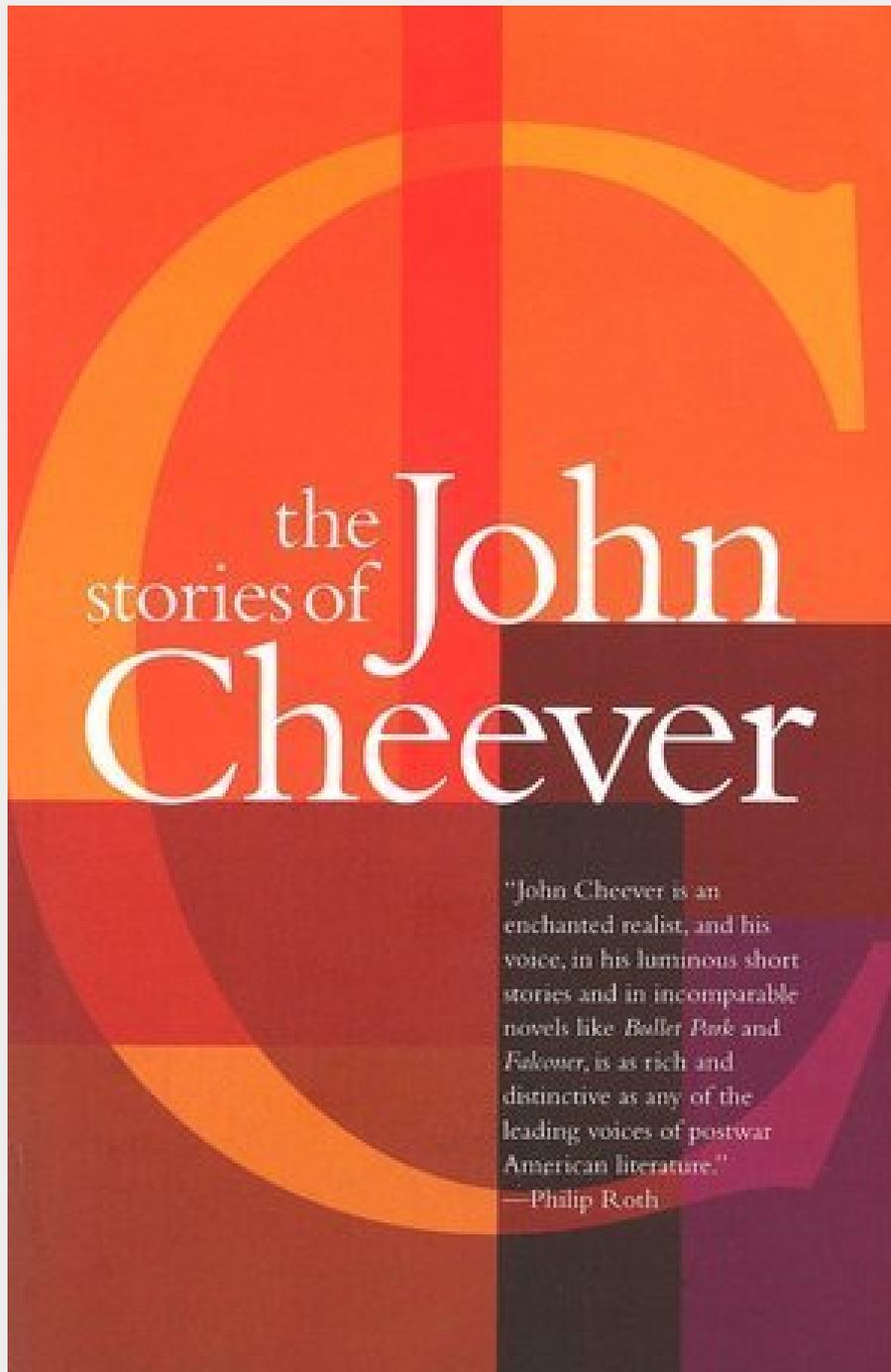
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10 thoughts on “The Stories of John Cheever”



Kim-kers Kim-kers says:

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Try reading John Cheever all summer and working at a country club That ll mess with you.

Reply



Perry Perry says:

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betta check yo self before you wreck yo self Da Ali G
Party Bear in Bleak MidSeptember d appreciate these stories , I m sure, if I could see the silver lining in sadness, broken lives and shattered dreams I loved three story collections from a few years ago which also had a melancholy bent *Fortune Smiles Stories* by Adam Johnson, *Thirteen Ways of Looking Fiction* by Colum McCann, and *The Tsar of Love and Techno Stories* by Anthony Marra For me, the difference of these three from Cheever s collected stories taken as a whole are their glimpse of hope in humanity, hint of redemption or forgiveness, or the implication that evil *may* be defeated in a battle of the forces though perhaps not in the full war.With Cheevers stories, I typically have difficulty seeing the redemptive If this classifies me as a naive idealist, a resident of a fantasy world, or just a dumbass, then so be it.Cheever s most famous story, *The Enormous Radio 1947* , illustrates why I m not particularly fond of this set In it, an NYC husband buys a dark gumwood cabinet radio when it was centerpiece furniture for his family s 12th floor flat despite their inability to afford it The Radio begins picking up conversations

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arguments from others in their building, which at first shock then fascinate them. The wife becomes obsessed with eavesdropping, then fears that others can hear her family's conversations. She then becomes depressed from steady consumption of the problems of an entire building. Much like the Radio, this collection depresses me like, say, hearing about others even fictional others: adultery, alcoholism and domestic abjection and or abuse. All of these stories touch on one of these 3 areas without a silver lining somewhere. Don't get me wrong Cheever wrote stories I appreciate and enjoy, including a few in this assortment. Yet as a whole, this selection acts as sort of Black Hole for depression. To be sure, these stories were likely grand in the late 40s through early 70s when written because they showed shiny, happy people from the City and the suburbs suffering problems that Hollywood would not show on television, the airwaves filled with black and white of the likes of Leave it to Beaver, The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet, and Father Knows Best. My favorite of these stories is The Sorrows of Gin, following a pre-teen Amy watch her parents get deeper and deeper into the bottle, attending parties nearly every night and rarely showing the slightest interest in Amy. Cheever wrote this from experience, as a lifelong alcoholic whose relationships were decimated by his alcohol abuse. I've not read or seen a story that so distilled and intended the negative effects of alcoholism on a family. I say alcoholism, not alcohol. Most people can drink in moderation and only occasionally the alcoholic, for whatever reason, cannot. Here, the selfish parents' selfishness steals time, love and care from their daughter. Amy's reaction and attempt to save her parents leads to an unexpected demoralization of the family as a unit. All in all an excellent collection of stories for the time period in terms of structure, writing, moments of revelation.

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Vit Babenco Vit Babenco says:

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John Cheever is a brilliant raconteur one of my most favourite He excellently knows the stuff our lives are made of. Although this entire anthology is a gold mine, *The Swimmer* and *The Day the Pig Fell into the Well* seems to be my preferred nuggets. This is not an imitation, she thought, this is not the product of custom, this is the unique place, the unique air, where my children have spent the best of themselves The realization that none of them had done well made her sink back in her chair She squinted the tears out of her eyes What had made the summer always an island, she thought what had made it such a small island What mistakes had they made What had they done wrong They had loved their neighbors, respected the force of modesty, held honor above gain Then where had they lost their competence, their freedom, their greatness Why should these good and gentle people who surrounded her seem like the figures in a tragedy Unrealized dreams, unfulfilled hopes, unsuccessful plans and the rivers of sadness they all are a part of our lives too.

Reply



Jeanette "Astute Crabbist" Jeanette

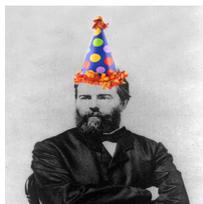
"Astute Crabbist" says:

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These stories are primarily about people who suck, but who somehow manage to maintain the appearance of people who *don t* suck Eventually, they push their luck

and are exposed Then all the neighbors gossip about them, because it s better to keep the focus on the suckers who ve been found out and hope no one finds out you suck just as bad, or worse So why am I giving five stars to a collection of stories about people who mostly suck Because John Cheever DOESN T suck He absurdifies common emotions, desires, and behaviors in such a way that they are recognizable in the extreme Not in yourself, of course, because you don t suck Oh no, not you But there are people all around you who want to seem upwardly mobile than they actually are, and they have ugly secrets.Don t get me wrong Not ALL of the stories follow the above pattern Some are sweet, and some are funny Cheever has a flair for finishing stories in ways you d least expect It s like sitting on a bee with your bare flesh exposed You re cruising along, happily oblivious, thinking *hmmmm.wonder where this story is going*. Then BAM You get a stinger in the end The sting doesn t last long, though It just makes you want to sample the *next* story to see where *it* will wind up.

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Jacob Jacob says:

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October 2009 , , . I m not a very good student of History I haven t read Herodotus, or Thucydides, or the other great classical historians But I did see 300, and I spent about five minutes on Wikipedia, so I know a little about the Battle of Thermopylae There s a monument there, at the site of the battle, with a neat little epitaph in Greek see above which, according to one translation, says Go tell the Spartans, stranger passing by, That here obedient to their laws we lie Now, I m no great student of Greek either, but those lines strike me as inaccurate They re too

formal, too quiet, too well, humble And if Frank Miller taught me anything, it's that the Spartans were anything but humble Or quiet Which leads me to believe the accurate translation should be something like this Hey, you Prick Go tell everyone how awesome we were Yeah, that's like it. Now, what does that have to do with The Stories of John Cheever Good question The way I see it, this handsome little collection presents itself just like that monument at Thermopylae It is formal, humble, almost genteel in a way, it is itself a monument to Cheever Go tell the readers, stranger passing by, that these are the stories of John Cheever They are fairly good You are invited to peruse them, if you like, and judge for yourself Bullshit That's sissy Athenian talk Humble and polite Greek doesn't cut it, not here, which is why you know you just know that what this book is really trying to say is THIS IS CHEEVER FUCK YEAH Ok, I'll admit, this comparison isn't entirely apt While Cheever and Sparta may both be awesome, they are hardly the same *kind* of awesome The Spartans were loud and ultraviolent and homoerotic Cheever was quiet and dry witted and clever You would never see a Spartan reading Cheever The Spartans were too brutal for Cheever perhaps they would prefer O'Connor instead, so it would probably be up to the Athenians those philosophers, those boy lovers to appreciate this book if a copy of The Stories of John Cheever, with English to Ancient Greek translation, fell back through time and landed in the acropolis, you can bet the Athenians would interpret it as a message from the gods and model their society around these stories The result, no doubt, would be the most fascinating Ancient Middle Class Suburban Greek society ever, one in which all the statesmen play tennis between debates in the agora, the philosophers are drunk on gin, and everyone is hush hush about the pederasty. But I digress These are some damn good stories Real top notch stuff Granted, a few of the weaker samplings should've been drowned at birth, but the stronger ones my particular

favorites Goodbye, My Brother, Clancy in the Tower of Babel, The Children, The Day the Pig Fell Into the Well, The Duchess, The Angel of the Bridge, and The Swimmer, among others could stand their ground against the mighty hordes of Persia, and I should just stop right here. Now then, stranger passing by, go and tell everyone how fucking awesome this is.

Reply



Jeffrey Keeten Jeffrey Keeten says:

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I have been reading this book for 18 months This isn't the kind of book you just grab and set down and read from cover to cover just like I wouldn't think most people would grab the collected works of Shakespeare and read it one brilliant play after brilliant play I have enjoyed having Cheever by my bedside always available when I needed a break from my other reading endeavors Cheever is one of those writers that equally encourages me to write and at the same time convinces me that I have no business writing Not all of these stories are home runs, thank goodness, I was relieved to discover he is mortal with red blood and black ink, but his strike outs were so few that certainly he would have had an alarmingly high on base percentage if writing were rewarded, like baseball, with bases I wanted to also make mention that these Library of America editions truly do add to the reading experience with Bible thin paper and sewn bindings These are books that are meant to be read time and time again and by multiple generations I own many of them and will steadily work my way through the best they have to offer.

Reply



Dan Dan says:

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The Stories of John Cheever John Cheever won both the National Book Award and the Pulitzer for this collection in 1979 He died in 1982 at the age of seventy Cheever s stories are full of soul searching and the polarities that exist in both our mind and our outward behaviors Some of his symbolism, I am certain, goes over my head but his stories are usually easy to follow Both his writing style and characters are usually tempered there are only a few moments of over the top drama Sometimes his stories even end before the typical dramatic climax I enjoy the stories of the older version of Cheever , when he was in his late forties to early sixties Most of these stories are in the second half of this collection Here are the eleven, of the sixty one stories in this collection, that resonated the most with me and that I think are wonderful examples of writing and story telling Most of these stories are quite famous Best Stories1 Goodbye My Brother This is the first story in the collection and was written by a young Cheever It is perhaps the most dramatic of the stories in this collection and focuses on the shocking capacity for humans to throw it all away based on little than long simmering resentment Very famous story studied at universities 2 Clancy in the Tower of Babel Clancy is a common man with good sensibilities but with too much pride As a super, he saves a wealthy man from suicide but won t acknowledge a gift of money that the wealthy man gave to his wife when he learned that Clancy lost his job while seriously ill One of the most poignant stories in the book Reminded me of Bernard Malamud as he also set so many of his stories in tenement buildings 3 The Season of Divorce A man named Trencher tries to

seduce the protagonist's wife. A reflection on how many marriages were held together in the 1950s because of the economic disadvantages facing women in a paternalistic world.⁴ *Five Forty Eight*: Boss sleeps with secretary and then fires her. It turns out she has psychiatric problems and it becomes clear he picked the wrong woman to cross as she chases him on the train. *Story of vengeance*.⁵ *The Country Husband*: Family doesn't really care that the dad nearly dies in an airplane crash. He is insufferably self-centered. He begins acting out and it escalates from his being rude to his neighbors and then on his plot to seduce the babysitter. Also a famous short story. *6 The Swimmer*: Ned decides to swim home, 8 miles away, by route of his friends and neighbors' pools. He is an alcoholic. Readers watch his mind disintegrate in a single afternoon. Strange and fantastic story. One of his most famous.⁷ *The World of Apples*: An aging poet full of nostalgia comes to grips with not winning the Nobel Prize but he gets an inspiration to write another poem that keeps him occupied in his final days.⁸ *Another Story*: The protagonist has an Italian friend who is a minor Prince and has moved to NYC and marries an American woman. She becomes resentful that she gave up an Opera career to marry a man who won't change or broaden his horizons. The protagonist goes on a business trip years later and meets a man who tells him of a similar story: his wife wanted to become a singer and eventually came to resent her husband for not supporting her. The stories are examples of chauvinistic men not understanding the women they marry.⁹ *Percy*: Story about a cousin and the cousin's mother. Percy: The cousin is a very young concert pianist but he gives up his career at a young age to marry a beautiful German immigrant. Percy, his mother, refuses to ever see her. Very sad and well-written story about the folly of living vicariously through one's children.¹⁰ *In the Fourth Alarm*: John Cheever's male protagonist is dealing with his wife's new found liberation as she joins an acting troupe. One of the

plays involves the women getting naked and simulating sex with the king The husband, perhaps understandably, is at his wit s end 11 The Jewels of the Cabots A middle class protagonist has an interest in a wealthy family with two daughters He learns secondhand of a murder involving the family But shortly thereafter he finds out there is money in the patriarch s will left for him and that is enough for him to say nothing Perhaps the most beautiful descriptive writing of any of the stories in spite of the dark undertones.5 stars I thoroughly enjoyed most of the stories This collection adds to the master of suburban ennui label that is often attributed to Cheever But there are also many excellent stories about tenements for example and of course his travels around the world.

Reply



Betsy Robinson Betsy Robinson says:

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August 22, 2015As predicted see earlier two posts, below , it took me months to finish this masterpiece To reiterate earlier comments, I read from front to back as well as back to front Not the best idea, it turns out, because the strongest stories are not in the middle I m adding this note for two reasons First, I googled the one story in sixty one that I didn t think worked, and I found a wonderful *New Yorker* piece by Brad Leithauser about Cheever s style and turn of phrase I was a drama major and dropped out of all the lit classes I started when I was in school because the teachers seemed fixated on writers personal lives which I thought was nobody s business Maybe I had some bad teachers I shouldn t say where because it s a renowned school Bennington , but if Mr Leithauser had been there, I would have taken his course

Perhaps some other readers will be interested in his article. Second, in addition to finishing Cheever's opus, I finally gave in and bought a Kindle I hate it. And knowing that I feel that way makes me even appreciative of the big fat orange Cheever book I own. When I finished it, I kissed it long and hard before I put it up on my shelf. And the fact that I can glance up at it it's lying sideways because I've run out of space and see Mr Cheever's name in big white letters against a two-toned amber background gives me comfort. I've heard a lot of things about Cheever my mother knew him that make me pretty sure he wasn't always fun yikes, none of my business. I apologize, but I am so happy to have him physically on my shelf. He is now a permanent member of my library family. Kindle can't come close to giving that kind of pleasure.

Feb 18, 2015 An update to the earlier quasi-review see below. I still haven't finished this book, and I'm in no rush to. I'm reading from front to back and back to front, so when I finish, I'll be somewhere in the middle of the book which, for inarticulate reasons, feels right. The stories flay and slay me, so one story a day, or every few days, is all I can handle. Last night I went to an Authors Guild symposium where one of the panelists described reading as an intimate social connection between a reader and a writer. I was struck by the word social. Intimate, yes, but social I certainly don't want John Cheever in the room while I'm reading, and I don't really want to meet him. But, yes, I feel intimately connected and safe in that connection *because* it is private, in my mind. I'm curious do other people feel an intimate social connection with the writer of a book they're reading. And if so, what does that mean to them. Is there that they want from the writer than the words and story in the book, privately I'd love responses to this post. I'm really curious.

Jan 5, 2015 I lied I haven't finished reading this, but I'm just going to cut to the chase and give it five stars. The stories in this 693 page opus appear in the chronological order Cheever wrote them. I started reading

from the front, then began reading from the back. I borrowed my copy of the book from the library, and since most of what I've read leaves me almost catatonic from awe and in need of inert time on my back on the couch in order to process, there is no way I'm going to finish this book in the two weeks allotted by the library. So in order to read this book in the time it demands, I'm going to have to buy it. Buying books scares me these days. Here's why. Nevertheless, I must risk it. Five stars. The guy was a master.

[Reply](#)



Alison Alison says:

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We read Cheever not because we love stories about the suburbs, but because Cheever shows us that a wild imagination can't be bound even by the suburbs. We enjoy the quality of observation, the dialogue, the airtight construction and what he teaches us about form both in every example and over the course of the collection, but we read him for those moments when his stories take wing to escape cliché, banality, and the mundane. A few thoughts on Cheever.

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Annelies Annelies says:

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I have been reading the short stories now for a long time. I'm not finished yet but sometime I will because they are so good. The stories are placed in New England or New

York There doesn't happen much in the stories on first sight I mean not a lot of action but they are focused on the relations between people Characterisation, conversation, exploring the relation between people that's what it's all about And Cheever is a master in it.

[Reply](#)
