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The ballad of the sad café by carson mccullers

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The Ballad of the Sad Café is Carson McCullers’s most nearly perfect treatment of her most common theme—the mystery of the love relationship. It is also a classic example of what has come to be known as southern Gothic or southern grotesque. Forsaking any attempt at realism, the story is a lyrical parable or fairy tale that takes place in a world less physical than poetic, involving characters less real than mythical. As critics have pointed out the genius of the work depends on the voice of the narrator who transforms what otherwise might be either foolish or repellent into the stuff of legend and dream.The plot has the simplicity of myth, and the triangular set of characters that constitute it have the mythic aura of the transcendent—from the giant man/woman Miss Amelia, to her equally giant adversary Marvin Macy, to the trickster figure of the dwarfish little hunchback Cousin Lymon. The story is so filled with narcissistic mirror reflections that it turns inward on itself like the crossed eyes of Miss Amelia, which are “turned inward so sharply that they seem to be exchanging with each other one long and secret gaze of grief.” It is as though the story springs from a single projective consciousness for whom all the characters are poetic embodiments of desire.As the central expository passage of this long story or novella suggests, the basic theme is the relationship between the lover and the beloved. The narrator argues that although love is a joint experience between two people, the lover and the beloved come from “different countries.” The beloved is merely a stimulus for the stored-up love within the lover, and the lover suffers because he or she knows that love is a solitary thing. The beloved can be of any description, says the narrator, for the quality of any love is determined by the lover. Thus everyone wants to be the lover, for the state of being beloved is intolerable to most. “The beloved fears and hates the lover, and with the best of reasons. For the lover is forever trying to strip bare his beloved.”McCullers’s story is a grotesque working out of these philosophic truths. Although the central part of the plot revolves around the mysterious arrival of the hunchback and the equally mysterious transformation of the formerly forbidding Miss Amelia into the doting lover of the indifferent and exploitative Cousin Lymon, the background for the story focuses on Miss Amelia’s marriage many years before to Marvin Macy, for whom she was the beloved. But Miss Amelia rejects this role and sends her despondent lover Macy away. When Macy, now a famed criminal who has served time in prison, returns and becomes the beloved to Cousin Lymon, the story moves inevitably toward a classic battle between the two giants for the little man. The story reaches its climax when just as Miss Amelia is about to triumph Cousin Lymon leaps on her back like a small animal and helps turn the tide in Macy’s favor. The hunchback’s departure with his beloved leaves Miss Amelia cracked and broken.Serving as the backdrop for this triangular relationship is the town itself, a classical chorus for whom the central godlike figures serve as a necessary unifying force. When Miss Amelia becomes the lover of the hunchback, the community becomes unified around the café, “the warm center of the town,” in communal gatherings inspired by the magic liquor distilled by Miss Amelia. Cousin Lymon is a magical creature who has an “instinct to establish immediate and vital contact between himself and all things in the world.” He is the archetypal mysterious stranger; no one knows who he is, how old he is, or where he came from.When Cousin Lymon runs off with Marvin Macy, the town becomes lonesome and sad, “like a place that is far off and estranged from all other places in the world.” Instead of joining them in a communal oneness, the only liquor available makes the people dream themselves into a dangerous inward world. The story, however, ends with a coda that suggests that in spite of the breakup of the communal order established by the lover between Miss Amelia and the little hunchback, there still remains a metaphor of unity, albeit a unity in despair, in the description of “The Twelve Moral Men.” The narrator describes a chain gang of seven black men and five white men who sing a song both somber and joyful that seems to come not from the men but from the earth itself.The Ballad of the Sad Café is one of the best known modern examples of what might be called short fiction’s tendency toward the principle of incarnation. Even as the world of the story is that of hard physical reality, the poetic power of the storyteller transforms profane reality into the realm of the sacred, projecting human desire in its most elemental forms.—Charles E. May
Marquerite Duras , Duras, Marquerite BORN: 1914, Saigon, French Indochina DIED: 1996, Paris, France NATIONALITY: French GENRE: Fiction, drama MAJOR WORKS: The Sea Wall... Bliss , Bliss Sources By the time of her death, Katherine Mansfield had established herself as an important and influential contemporary short story writer.... Axolotl , Axolotl Julio Cortazar 1956 Sources Julio Cortazar’s short story “Axolotl,” from his collection Final del juego (End of the Game, and Other Stories)... Came , Cane Introduction Author Biography Plot Summary Characters Themes Style Historical Context Critical Overview Criticism Sources For Further Study Cane... Pyramus And Thisbe , Pyramus •Lammas • Cadmus • Las Palmas •chiasmus, Erasmus •Nostradamus •famous, ignoramus, Seamus, shamus •Polyphemus, Remus •grimace • Michaelmas •Ch... Elegy , Elegy Sources The Elegiac Tradition. When modern literary critics speak of “elegy” or “elegiac,” they generally have in mind a type of poetry charact... The Ballad of the Sad Cafe and Other Stories consists of the eponymous classic novella, alongside six short stories: "Wunderkind", "The Jockey", "Madame Zilensky and the King of Finland", "The Sojourner", "A Domestic Dilemma" and "A Tree, a Rock, a Cloud", by American author Carson McCullers, published in 1951. The Ballad of the Sad Cafe is set in a small town in the Southern US, and follows Miss Amelia Evans, a woman strong in body and character, meeting a hunchback man, Cousin Lymon, who claims to be a relation. When Miss Amelia takes the stranger into her home, rumours circulate that she has only done so to take the hunchback's possessions. A group of men enter the house and find the hunchback is well. Miss Amelia offers alcohol and crackers in hospitality. This is the beginning of the café, which becomes a popular gathering place. Miss Amelia falls in love with Cousin Lymon. But Miss Amelia was briefly married to a violent man, Marvin Macy, who returns from prison to wreak havoc, aided and abetted by Miss Amelia's new love. In order to continue enjoying our site, we ask that you confirm your identity as a human. Thank you very much for your cooperation. Preview Preview For the film, see The Ballad of the Sad Café (film). The Ballad of the Sad Café First editionAuthorCarson McCullersCover artistR MurrayCountryUnited StatesLanguageEnglishGenreSouthern GothicPublished1951, Houghton MifflinOCLC1112597LC ClassPS3525.A1772 B3 The Ballad of the Sad Café, first published in 1951, is a book by Carson McCullers comprising a novella of the same title along with six short stories: "Wunderkind", "The Jockey", "Madame Zilensky and the King of Finland", "The Sojourner", "A Domestic Dilemma", and "A Tree, a Cloud". The first edition of the book also included McCullers' previously published novels The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter, Reflections in a Golden Eye, and The Member of the Wedding. The American playwright Edward Albee adapted the novella as a stage play in 1963, which itself was adapted into a 1991 film of the same name starring Vanessa Redgrave and Keith Carradine. Plot of the novella "The Ballad of the Sad Cafe" opens in a small, isolated town in the Southern United States. The story introduces Miss Amelia Evans, strong in both body and mind, who is approached by a hunchbacked man with only a suitcase in hand who claims to be her kin. When Miss Amelia, whom the townspeople see as a calculating woman who never acts without reason, takes the stranger into her home, rumors begin to circulate that Miss Amelia has done so in order to take what the hunchback has in his suitcase. When the rumors hit their peak, a group of eight men come to her store, sitting outside on the steps for the day and waiting to see if something will happen. Finally, they enter the store all at once and are stunned to see that the hunchback is alive and well. With everyone gathered inside, Miss Amelia brings out some liquor and crackers, which further shocks the men, as they have never witnessed Miss Amelia be hospitable enough to allow drinking inside her home. This is the beginning of the café. Miss Amelia and the hunchback, Cousin Lymon, unintentionally create a new tradition for the town, and the people gather inside the café on Sunday evenings, often until midnight. It is apparent, though surprising, to the townspeople that Miss Amelia has fallen in love with Cousin Lymon, and has begun to change slightly. When the townspeople see this, they relate it to another odd incident in which Miss Amelia was also involved: the issue of her ten-day marriage. Miss Amelia had been married to a man named Marvin Macy, who was a vicious and cruel character before he fell in love with her. He changed his ways and became good-natured, but reverted to his old self when his love was rejected after a failed ten-day marriage in which he gave up everything he possessed. He broke out into a rage, committing a string of felonies before being caught and locked up in the state penitentiary. When he is released, Marvin Macy returns to the town and begins to take advantage of Cousin Lymon's admiration for him, using him to crush Miss Amelia's heart. Macy and Miss Amelia engage in a physical fight, and just as Miss Amelia is about to take the upper hand, Lymon jumps her from behind, allowing Macy to prevail. Macy and Cousin Lymon ransack the café, break the till, steal Miss Amelia's curios and money, and disappear from town, leaving Miss Amelia alone. The novella ends with "The Twelve Moral Men", a brief passage about twelve men in a chain-gang, whose actions outline what happened in the town. Adaptations The Ballad of the Sad Café was adapted into a stage play of the same name by Edward Albee in 1963. Albee's play was adapted by screenwriter Michael Hirst into a 1991 film of the same name starring Vanessa Redgrave and Keith Carradine.[1] References ^ "The Ballad of the Sad Cafe". AFI Catalog of Feature Films. Los Angeles, California: American Film Institute. Archived from the original on April 24, 2019. External links Time article, June 04, 1951 Retrieved from "

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