

The Writings of Tom Wolfe(s)

Actually, there are two Tom Wolfes. The true Southern novelist Thomas Wolfe was born in Asheville, NC in 1900. After graduating from UNC, he received his masters degree from Harvard, traveled to Europe, returned to the US, and died of miliary tuberculosis at the age of 37. Although he's had a tremendous impact on young American writers -- particularly those in the southeast -- and has made a significant contribution to our literary heritage, it's become fashionable lately for critics to denigrate him. (But even if an angel came down from Heaven to compose the most exquisite prose imaginable, someone would malign it. Besides, when was the last time you visited the home of a deceased literary critic?)

Wolfe is best known for his novels *Look Homeward, Angel* and *Of Time and the River*. Together, they tell the story of a young man's awakening to the world around him. In them, Wolfe conveys the human appetite for adventure and independence in a uniquely American way. He tells of being raised by an eat-your-greens mother, and writes of a train whistle piercing the evening stillness, of a boy growing up next to a kitchen stove. He depicts the Catawba mountain folk who inhabit a world that can get haunted and sinister. He portrays their greed, political corruption, and hypocrisy; qualities that still taint and limit our entire culture. He lets them tell their own stories, in their own words, centered on a deeply moving tale of family loyalty and brotherly love. He writes with remarkable understanding, combining a sense of youthfulness with profound wisdom.

He no doubt needed a mountaintop from which to fling his work: his young men are 'lustful' and 'lonely;' his young women 'yolky.' Though never craftsmanship, his prolific writing occasionally soars to Olympian heights yet is always accessible to the general reader. Thomas Wolfe now rests beside some of his best novels on a quiet Asheville hillside. The other Tom Wolfe (not-related), the guy who wears white suits and lives in New York, who authored such works as *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*, *The Right Stuff* and *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, doesn't like to talk much about himself so I won't either.

--Essay by Bill Lounsbury

Some of the SUMMER PROGRAMS

At Manchester Library

Washington's Owls

Thursday, July 8, 1 pm

Boats That Float (& those that don't) Aug 10, 10:30 am

Manchester's Most Popular Books

Mastering the Art of French Cooking

Julie & Julia

Artisan Bread in 5 Minutes a Day

The Art of Racing in the Rain

Pirate Latitudes

The Lost Symbol

Starvation Heights

Breakfast at Sally's

Guernsey Literary

Gone Tomorrow

Harry Potter series

Twilight Series

Three Cups of Tea

Kite Runner

The Shack

Girl With the Dragon Tattoo

Pillars of the Earth

Diary of a Wimpy Kid series

Some Great Summer Reads!

(Wall Street Journal | Friday, May 28, 2010)

Fiction:

The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake by Aimee Bender

A Visit from the Goon Squad by Jennifer Egan

Mr. Peanut by Adam Ross

The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet by David Mitchell

In the Name of Honor by Richard North Patterson

What Is Left the Daughter by Howard Norman

The Cookbook Collector by Allegra Goodman

Star Island by Carl Hiaasen

Super Sad True Love Story by Gary Shteyngart

I Curse the River of Time by Per Petterson

Turbulence by Giles Foden

Nonfiction:

Blind Descent: The Quest to Discover the Deepest Place on Earth
by Tames Tabor

How Did You Get This Number by Sloane Crosley

Hitch 22 by Christopher Hitchens

Long for This World: The Strange Science of Immortality

by Jonathan Weiner

Brilliant: The Evolution of Artificial Light by Jane Brox

Historical Fiction

Recommended by NPR's Michael Schaub

The Long Ships by Frans G. Bengtsson

(translated from the Swedish by Michael Meyer)

Parrot and Oliver in America by Peter Carey

The Last Rendezvous by Anne Plantagenet

(translated from the French by Willard Wood)

Stettin Station by David Downing

I Hotel by Karen Tei Yamashita

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