

## The Dead Father Donald Barthelme

Viewed in its context of upscale New York, the art circuit and *The New Yorker*, the canon of Barthelme's work is an invaluable repository of the literary, philosophical, political and cultural ecology of his time.

This collection of essays and reviews written between 1960 and 1985 are a deliberate response to the current, increasingly specialized forms of criticism.

This collection of pithy, brilliantly acerbic pieces is a companion to *Sixty Stories*, Barthelme's earlier retrospective volume. Barthelme spotlights the idiosyncratic, haughty, sometimes downright ludicrous behavior of human beings, but it is style rather than content which takes precedence.

Clever anachronisms and mock-Arthurian diction mark this madcap, absurdist 20th-century parable, in which Barthelme transposes King Arthur and his Round Table to 1940s England under Nazi bombardment. --Publisher.

An "ethnographic" novel that portrays life in California's Napa Valley as it might be a very long time from now, imagined not as a high tech future but as a time of people once again living close to the land.

Donald Barthelme (1931–1989) is regarded as one of the most imitated and influential American fiction writers since the early 1960s. In *Donald Barthelme: An Exhibition*, Jerome Klinkowitz presents both an appreciation and a comprehensive examination of the life work of this pathbreaking contemporary writer. A blend of close reading, biography, and theory, this retrospective—informed by Klinkowitz's expert command of postmodern American fiction—contributes significantly to a new understanding of Barthelme's work. Klinkowitz argues that the central piece in the Barthelme canon, and the key to his artistic method, is his widely acknowledged masterpiece, *The Dead Father*. In turning to this pivotal work, as well as to Barthelme's short stories and other novels, Klinkowitz explores the way in which Barthelme reinvented the tools of narration, characterization, and thematics at a time when fictive techniques were largely believed to be exhausted. Klinkowitz, who was one of the first scholars to study Barthelme's work and became its definitive bibliographer, situates Barthelme's life and work within a broad spectrum of influences and affinities. A consideration of developments in painting and sculpture, for example, as well as those of contemporaneous fiction, contribute to Klinkowitz's analysis. This astute reading will provide great insight for readers, writers, and critics of contemporary American fiction seeking explanations and justifications of Barthelme's critical importance in the literature of our times.

FROM THE NUMBER ONE SUNDAY TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR Philip Noble is an eleven-year-old in crisis. His pub landlord father has died in a road accident, and his mother is succumbing to the greasy charms of her dead husband's brother, Uncle Alan. The remaining certainties of Philip's life crumble away when his father's ghost appears in the pub and declares Uncle Alan murdered him. Arming himself with weapons from the school chemistry cupboard, Philip vows to carry out the ghost's relentless demands for revenge. But can the words of a ghost be trusted any more than the lies of the living?

Sad, fierce, and funny, a new take on the South and those who are adrift in a disconnected modern world.

In this artful fusion of espionage thriller and science fiction, Manuel Puig tells one story shared by three women - an actress in the 1930s, living in her husband's fairy-tale castle; a young woman in Mexico City in the 1970s, convalescing in a hospital; and a futuristic cyborg sex slave, occupying an artificial landscape. In the haunting and mysterious language for which he is renowned, Puig explores the links between

these women, as well as the links between genders and generations.

A cross between Daniel Woodrell and Annie Proulx, Wyoming is about the stubborn grip of inertia and whether or not it is possible to live without accepting oneself. It's 1988 and Shelley Cooper is in trouble. He's broke, he's been fired from his construction job, and his ex-wife has left him for their next door neighbor and a new life in Kansas City. The only opportunity on his horizon is fifty pounds of his brother's high-grade marijuana, which needs to be driven from Colorado to Houston and exchanged for a lockbox full of cash. The delivery goes off without a hitch, but getting home with the money proves to be a different challenge altogether. Fueled by a grab bag of resentments and self-punishment, Shelley becomes a case study in the question of whether it's possible to live without accepting yourself, and the dope money is the key to a lock he might never find. JP Gritton's portrait of a hapless aspirant at odds with himself and everyone around him is both tender and ruthless, and Wyoming considers the possibility of redemption in a world that grants forgiveness grudgingly, if at all.

With a New Introduction by Jonathan Franzen There's Rob, Bob, Tom, Paul, Ralph, and Noah; Nick, Dennis, Bertram, Russell, and Virgil.

The doctor, the documentary filmmaker, and the sculptor in burning steal; the eldest, the youngest, and the celebrated "perfect" brother, Benedict. In Donald Antrim's mordantly funny novel *The Hundred Brothers*, our narrator and his colossal fraternity of ninety-eight brothers (one couldn't make it) have assembled in the crumbling library of their family's estate for a little sinister fun. Executed with the invention and intelligence of Barthelme and Pynchon, Antrim's taxonomy of male specimens is in equal proportions disturbing and absurdly hilarious.

Presents a collection of sixty short stories by twentieth-century American author Donald Barthelme.

Donald Barthelme was one of the most influential and inventive writers of the 20th century. In this volume of unpublished and previously uncollected stories, he transforms the absurd into the real in his usual epiphanic and engaging style. Delving into such themes as the perils of the unfulfilled existence and the relationships among politics, sex, art, and life, this collection will delight both old fans and new readers.

"An exquisitely crafted memoir" by two brothers who lost their parents, lost their inheritance—and almost lost their freedom (*The Wall Street Journal*). Frederick Barthelme and his brother Steven were both accomplished, respected writers with stable adult lives when they lost both of their parents in rapid succession. They had already lost their other brother, just a few years earlier. Suddenly they were on their own, emotionally unmoored—and unprepared for what would happen next. Their late father had been a prominent architect, and the brothers were left with a healthy inheritance. Over the following several years, they would lose close to a quarter million dollars in the gambling boats off the Mississippi coast. Then, in a bizarre twist, they were charged with violating state gambling laws, fingerprinted, and thrown into the surreal world of felony prosecution. For two years these widely publicized charges hung over their heads, shadowing their every step. *Double Down* is the wry, often heartbreaking story of how Frederick and Steven Barthelme got into this predicament. It is also a reflection on the allure of casinos and the pull and power of illusions that can destroy our lives if we aren't careful. "One of the best firsthand accounts ever written about organized gambling. Like *Goodman Brown*, taking a walk with a hooded stranger into the darkness of the New England woods, the Barthelme brothers suddenly find themselves inside the maw of the monster. The compulsion to control, to intuit the future, to be painted by magic, could not be better or more accurately described." —James Lee Burke "Beautifully evoking the gamblers' addiction, their mesmerizing account is best read as a novel Camus might have imagined, with the writer/protagonists as their own lost characters. A work of high art; enthusiastically recommended." —Library Journal

From the winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, here is the universally acclaimed novel—winner of the Booker Prize and

the basis for an award-winning film. This is Kazuo Ishiguro's profoundly compelling portrait of Stevens, the perfect butler, and of his fading, insular world in post-World War II England. Stevens, at the end of three decades of service at Darlington Hall, spending a day on a country drive, embarks as well on a journey through the past in an effort to reassure himself that he has served humanity by serving the "great gentleman," Lord Darlington. But lurking in his memory are doubts about the true nature of Lord Darlington's "greatness," and much graver doubts about the nature of his own life. The definitive collection of a twentieth-century master of the short story, whose unforgettable inventions revolutionized the form. The short stories of Donald Barthelme, revered by the likes of Thomas Pynchon and George Saunders, are gems of invention and pathos that have dazzled and delighted readers since the 1960s. Here, for the first time, these essential stories are preserved as they were published in Barthelme's original collections, beginning with *Come Back, Dr. Caligari* (1964), a book that made a generation of readers sit up and take notice. *Collected Stories* also includes the work that appeared for the first time in Barthelme's two retrospective anthologies, *Sixty and Forty*, as well as a selection of uncollected stories. Discover, in this comprehensive gathering, Barthelme's unique approach to fiction, his upside-down worlds that are nonetheless grounded in fundamental human truths, his scrambled visions of history that yield unexpected insights, and his genius for dialogue, parody, and collage, which was for him "the central principle of all art in the twentieth century." Engage with sophisticated works of fiction that, often in just the space of a few pages, wrest profundities out of what might first seem merely ephemeral, even trivial. And experience, along with Barthelme's imaginative and frequently subversive ideas, the pleasures of a consummate stylist whose sentences are worth marveling at and savoring. Introduced with a sharp and discerning essay by editor Charles McGrath and annotation that clarifies Barthelme's freewheeling, wide-ranging allusions, the landmark volume is a desert-island edition for fans and the ideal introduction to new readers eager to find out why, as Dave Eggers writes, Barthelme's "every sentence ... makes me want to stop and write something of my own. He fires all of my synapses and connects them in new ways." Thirty years after its publication, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* was described by *The New York Times* as "perhaps the most influential single work in the history of town planning....[It] can also be seen in a much larger context. It is first of all a work of literature; the descriptions of street life as a kind of ballet and the biting satiric account of traditional planning theory can still be read for pleasure even by those who long ago absorbed and appropriated the book's arguments." Jane Jacobs, an editor and writer on architecture in New York City in the early sixties, argued that urban diversity and vitality were being destroyed by powerful architects and city planners. Rigorous, sane, and delightfully epigrammatic, Jacobs's small masterpiece is a blueprint for the humanistic management of cities. It is sensible, knowledgeable, readable, indispensable. The author has written a new foreword for this Modern Library edition.

McCaffery interprets the works of three major writers of radically experimental fiction: Robert Coover; Donald Barthelme; and William H. Gass. The term "metafiction" here refers to a strain in American writing where the self-conscious approach to the art of fiction-making is a commentary on the nature of meaning itself.

When Mathilda discovers a mysterious Chinese house in her backyard, she enters a new world of imagination and adventure.

The Dead Father Farrar, Straus and Giroux

"The Dead Father" is a gargantuan half-dead, half-alive, part mechanical, wise, vain, powerful being who still has hopes for himself--even while he is being dragged by means of a cable toward a mysterious goal. In this extraordinary novel, marked by the imaginative use of language that influenced a generation of fiction writers, Donald Barthelme offered a glimpse into his fictional universe. As Donald Antrim writes in his introduction, "Reading 'The Dead Father,' one has the sense that its author enjoys an almost complete artistic freedom . . . a permission to reshape, misrepresent, or even ignore the world as we find it . . . Laughing along with its author, we escape anxiety and feel alive."

An inventive, satiric modern retelling of the classic fairy tale provides an incisive and biting commentary on the absurdities and complexities of modern life. In *Snow White*, Donald Barthelme subjects the traditional fairy tale to postmodern aesthetics. In the novel, the seven dwarves are men who live communally with Snow White and earn a living by washing buildings and making Chinese baby food. Snow White quotes Mao and the dwarves grapple with low self-esteem in this raucous retelling of the classic tale.

The regular customers at a city bar talk about their lives and problems

In the 1960s Donald Barthelme came to prominence as the leader of the Postmodern movement. He was a fixture at the *New Yorker*, publishing more than 100 short stories, including such masterpieces as "Me and Miss Mandible," the tale of a thirty-five-year-old sent to elementary school by clerical error, and "A Shower of Gold," in which a sculptor agrees to appear on the existentialist game show *Who Am I?* He had a dynamic relationship with his father that influenced much of his fiction. He worked as an editor, a designer, a curator, a news reporter, and a teacher. He was at the forefront of literary Greenwich Village which saw him develop lasting friendships with Thomas Pynchon, Kurt Vonnegut, Tom Wolfe, Grace Paley, and Norman Mailer. Married four times, he had a volatile private life. He died of cancer in 1989. The recipient of many prestigious literary awards, he is best remembered for the classic novels *Snow White*, *The Dead Father*, and many short stories, all of which remain in print today. *Hiding Man* is the first biography of Donald Barthelme, and it is nothing short of a masterpiece.

The dead father, who is some 3,200 cubits long, is being hauled across the landscape by means of a cable pulled by

nineteen or so of his fathers. Except the dead father is not really dead. He is past his prime, sexually and authoritatively. He is vain and foolish, but he looms large. He has been a confessor (his huge hollow leg is large enough to contain confessionals) and an autocrat. A manual for sons, offering sample fatherly monologues and tips on identifying fathers by color and general habit, is included for the confused.

The Esterházy, one of Europe's most prominent aristocratic families, are closely linked to the rise and fall of the Hapsburg Empire. Princes, counts, commanders, diplomats, bishops, and patrons of the arts, revered, respected, and occasionally feared by their contemporaries, their story is as complex as the history of Hungary itself. *Celestial Harmonies* is the intricate chronicle of this remarkable family, a saga spanning seven centuries of epic conquest, tragedy, triumph, and near annihilation. Told by Péter Esterházy, a scion of this populous clan, *Celestial Harmonies* is dazzling in scope and profound in implication. It is fiction at its most awe-inspiring. This P.S. edition features an extra 16 pages of insights into the book, including author interviews, recommended reading, and more.

"No other word for it: a charming book." Peter S. Prescott, *Newsweek*

Set amidst the tatters of post-Katrina Gulf Coast Mississippi, *Waveland* is a brilliantly observed portrait of our times from one of the most incisive novelists at work today. Partially retired architect Vaughn Williams does what he can to remain "viable." Battling the doldrums of midlife, he teaches an occasional class, reads the newspapers, scours the Internet, and thinks obsessively about his late father. When his ex-wife seeks refuge from her hotheaded boyfriend, Vaughn and his girlfriend, Greta, agree to let her move in, perhaps a little too cavalierly. Add in Vaughan's annoyingly successful younger brother, who carries a torch for Vaughn's ex-wife, and lingering suspicions about Greta's involvement in her husband's murder and the result is an emotionally resonant tale of mortality, love, regret, and redemption that only Barthelme could unwind.

'I said that although hanging Colby was almost certainly against the law, we had a perfect moral right to do so because he was our friend, belonged to us in various important senses, and he had after all gone too far.' Donald Barthelme is a puckish player with language, a writer of short but endlessly rewarding comic gems, a thinker and an experimenter. In these nine short stories, whether writing about a hairy, donkeyish king or a touching, private gesture of city-sized proportions, his is a surreal, deadpan genius. This book includes *Some of Us Had Been Threatening Our Friend Colby*, *The Glass Mountain*, *I Bought a Little City*, *The Palace at Four A.M.*, *Chablis*, *The School*, *Margins*, *Game* and *The Balloon*.

With a New Introduction by George Saunders *A New York Times Book Review* Notable Book of the Year It is early spring, and Tom has called together his fellow psychologists at the Krakower Institute for their biannual pancake supper—a chance for likeminded analysts to talk shop and casually unburden themselves over flapjacks. But, as Tom knows (at least subconsciously),

his brainy colleagues are a little on edge—simmering with romantic tension and professional grievance, their stew of conflicting ego and id just might boil to the surface before the pretty waitress brings their next coffee refill. When Tom tries to provoke a food fight, a rival colleague locks him in a therapeutic hold, triggering a transcendent if totally bizarre transformation that will free Tom to confront his greatest pleasures and fears. Darkly funny and beautifully written, *The Verificationist* confirms Donald Antrim as one of America's best and most original authors.

Nothing is simple for the men and women in Donald Antrim's stories. As they do the things we all do—bum a cigarette at a party, stroll with a girlfriend down Madison Avenue, take a kid to the zoo—they're confronted with their own uncooperative selves. These artists, writers, lawyers, teachers, and actors make fools of themselves, spiral out of control, have delusions of grandeur, despair, and find it hard to imagine a future. They talk, they listen, they hope, they dream. They look for communion in a city, both beautiful and menacing, which can promise so much and yield so little. But they are hungry for life. They want to love and be loved. These stories, all published in *The New Yorker* over the last fifteen years, make it clear that Antrim is one of America's most important writers. His work has been praised by his significant contemporaries, including Jonathan Franzen, Thomas Pynchon, Jeffrey Eugenides, and George Saunders, who described *The Verificationist* as "one of the most pleasure-giving, funny, perverse, complicated, addictive novels of the last twenty years." And here is Antrim's best book yet: the story collection that reveals him as a master of the form.

What is postmodern literary subjectivity? How to talk about it without falling in the trap of negative hyper-essentialism or being seduced by exuberant lit speak? One way out of this dilemma, as this book suggests, is via a redefinition of the concept in the context of Emmanuel Levinas and his radical ethics. By defining subjectivity as an ethically charged act of language, Levinas provides a fresh perspective on the often trivialized aspects of postmodern poetics such as referentiality and affect construction strategies. The foregrounding of the ethical dimension of those poetic elements has far-reaching consequences for how we read postmodern texts and understand postmodernism in general. Thus, to prove the benefits of the Levinasian approach, the author applies it to the work of the canonical American postmodernist, Donald Barthelme, and explains the distinctly ethical character of his apparently surfictional experiments.

"A dark, suburban fantasy . . . richly funny, even whimsical, and bizarrely familiar." —*The New Yorker* In the seaside community of Donald Antrim's *Elect Mr. Robinson for a Better World*, the citizens are restless. The mayor has fired stinger missiles into the Botanical Garden reflecting pool, and his public execution was a messy affair. As these hawkish suburbanites fortify their houses with deadly moats and land mines, a former third-grade teacher named Pete Robinson steps forward with a tenuous bid to replace the mayor. But can anyone satisfy the terrible will of the people? By turns funny and phantasmagorical, fiercely intelligent and imaginative, Donald Antrim's story of suburban civics turned macabre is a new American classic.

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