



The Burned Children of America, Zadie Smith, Hamish Hamilton, 2003, 0241142059, 9780241142059, . Showcasing the work of an outstanding literary generation, this collection of short stories (almost all previously unpublished outside America) is the perfect introduction to nineteen of the best young writers in the United States today. We see here new, distinctive voices emerging - offering their readers an America quite different in spirit from that explored by the writers who preceded them. In Zadie Smith's words; 'Set apart from the exuberant possibilities of Bellow's America, the masculine raging of Roth's, the lyricism of Morrison's, the America of these stories is more muted, the characters less hysterical in their trajectory, at odds with themselves, uncertain. Why are these writers so sad, so burned - what is the originating trauma? Read The Burned Children of America and make up your own mind..

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Instruction Manual for Swallowing , Adam Marek, Dec 1, 2008, , 216 pages. Revealing a bestiary of hybrids from the techno-crazed future and the mythological past, this surreal short story collection takes imaginative leaps through a science fiction

Street Games , Rosellen Brown, 2001, Fiction, 183 pages. A collection of short stories reveal the life of a Brooklyn neighborhood and the lives, experiences, and emotions of the men and women of all ethnic backgrounds who live there

Jerusalem The Biography, Simon Sebag Montefiore, 2012, History, 650 pages. Presents an epic story of the holy city at the heart of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, drawing on new archival materials, current scholarship, and the author's own family

Long Way Home , Nancy Holder, Jeff Mariotte, 2001, Fiction, 288 pages. Buffy and Angel venture into a terrifying alternate reality populated by dragons and other legendary monsters to rescue a group of kidnapped teens, only to discover that Spike

The innocents , Carolyn Slaughter, May 1, 1986, Fiction, 217 pages. .

McSweeney's , Dave Eggers, Nov 30, 2003, , 273 pages. Issue 12 is made up of three parts. The first and largest section consists entirely of new writers -- new to us, probably new to you, and not even well-known by their own

Flying Leap Stories, Judy Budnitz, Nov 15, 1998, Fiction, 244 pages. Elena leaves her home in Eastern Europe to travel to America and a new world, living an adventure that eventually includes her daughter, granddaughter, and great-granddaughter

A Black Englishman A Novel, Carolyn Slaughter, Nov 15, 2005, Fiction, 352 pages. The author of Dreams of the Kalahari crafts another powerful novel of India, this one set in the tumultuous decade following World War I when India began to demand its

Half Broke Horses , Jeannette Walls, Oct 6, 2009, Fiction, 272 pages. The author offers a novel based on the life of her grandmother, Lily Casey Smith, who learned to break horses in childhood, journeyed 500 miles on a pony as a teen to become a

Milo's Marauders , Danny King, Jan 1, 2005, , 248 pages. Darren Mile has been in and out of prison since he was fifteen. Now twenty-seven, he's released from his latest stretch and returns home vowing to go straight. But things aren't

Martha and Hanwell , Zadie Smith, 2005, Fiction, 48 pages. Every book tells a story . . . And the 70 titles in the Pocket Penguins series are emblematic of the renowned breadth and quality that formed part of the original Penguin

The future dictionary of America a book to benefit progressive causes in the 2004 elections featuring over 170 of America's best writers and artists, Dave Eggers, Nicole Krauss, Jonathan Safran Foer, 2004, Humor, 208 pages. Presents a collection of hypothetical and satirical terms and phrases that may be sometime in the future, when the Bush administration is not in power..

2666, Part 1 , Roberto Bolaño, Natasha Wimmer, Nov 11, 2008, , 912 pages. THE POSTHUMOUS MASTERWORK FROM ONE OF THE GREATEST AND MOST INFLUENTIAL MODERN WRITERS (JAMES WOOD, THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW) Composed in the last years of Roberto

Not being the world's biggest Zadie Smith fan I was a bit hesitant about this book. But once I got over it I found myself reading the best collection of short stories I'd read in years. The book contains all the big names - the ones who end up on Oprah. But there are also gems by people I'd never heard of.

Los diecinueve relatos incluidos en la antología tienen sus virtudes, ninguno tiene desperdicio. Unos son algo irregulares, otros son buenos, y unos pocos son excepcionales. La mayoría de estos cuentos están caracterizados por dos obsesiones: la muerte y la publicidad. Narran las vicisitudes del americano medio enfrentado a una sociedad de consumo, sumida en el desencanto y temerosa de la muerte y la enfermedad.

I read this years ago and felt the urge to borrow it again when I last swung by the library. Eying the author list and re-reading the stories, it felt like coming across the forgotten spare room in your grandparents' house and seeing faint memories hidden in the dust. A little hard to objectively gauge my feelings on the stories due to the nostalgia in other words. I will say that the story of the toothed woman in Dentaphilia by Julia Slavin has haunted me all these years. I also recognised The...more I read this years ago and felt the urge to borrow it again when I last swung by the library. Eying the author list and re-reading the stories, it felt like coming across the forgotten spare room in your grandparents' house and seeing faint memories hidden in the dust. A little hard to objectively gauge my feelings on the stories due to the nostalgia in other words. I will say that the story of the toothed woman in Dentaphilia by Julia Slavin has haunted me all these years. I also recognised The Snow Frog by Arthur Bradford from the title and was pleased to confirm my suspicion that it was indeed enjoyable. And.. actually, there are very few I didn't enjoy re-reading. I think it may be a sense of what Zadie Smith describes in the introduction as "abstract whimsy" combined with "... genuinely [wanting] to tell you a story..." which appeals to me. No pompous navel-gazing, just storytelling, occasionally fantastical, but generally sincere and sweet.(less)

A good collection of short stories. Unfortunately, by the time I read this book, the theme (sadness at the soullessness of corporate America) was already dated. My favorites were the stories of Saunders (bitter and sad), Wallace (raw, a sense of panic jumping out at you), Slavin (kafkaesque, albeit a bit too sentimental), Homes (appallingly funny), and Foer (clever, funny and sad).

There are some fine stories in this collection. The one about Stephen, the letter writing dog, was great. Also enjoyed the one about the guy whose wife starts growing teeth all over her body. Best of

all was the one about the twelve year old boy who has an affair with his sister's Barbie doll. Brilliant.

Zadie Smith wrote in her intro that the thread connecting these stories was one of sadness. I guess ... but it was not the sadness that you would find and appreciate in a story by Ford or Carver -- much of it just felt selfish and self-absorbing. Some of these stories were just nonsensical crap wishing it was literature. So...more First I'll say that there were some short stories in this that I really liked and a couple of new authors I'll keep an eye out for - really enjoyed "Faith" and "Flush" but ...

There are some great, actually fantastic stories in this collection, but after reading the whole book I am stuck with the feeling that what young, contemporary literature in America is today is finding some kind of quirk you can add to the universe we sort of know, a twist to make it surreal, and it felt almost formulaic by the end of it. That being said there were a few stories that really stuck with me from this collection and I truly recommend giving it a read.

Actually, this anthology of stories by 19 young Americans - Generation YA, perhaps? - is called Zadie Smith Introduces the Burned Children of America. The names of the unrecognised editors appear on neither cover nor title page but in a publisher's note: "This book is based on the Italian edition of The Burned Children of America, edited by Marco Cassini and Martina Testa ..."

So the full title is a triumph of promotion and personality, a case of White Teeth meets Burned Children across the Atlantic, via Roma. Smith detects a "chorus of melancholy" in the collection (indeed, one of its contributors has published a book wittily titled The Melancholy of Anatomy) and observes that throughout it, "two things seem prominent: fear of death and advertising".

Whether "advertising" or "fear of advertising" is prominent is unclear. Yet one thing is clear. In endorsing the anthology with Smith's famous name, the publishers are locked into a contradiction - if not an act of bad faith - with the book's leitmotif: advertising. Let us, however, resist that churlish suspicion.

Cassini and Testa's title derives from a story by David Foster Wallace, Incarnations of Burned Children. Wallace is one of a small number of famous names in the collection - Jeffrey Eugenides, Dave Eggers, A.M. Homes, Rick Moody, Jonathan Safran Foer. That two-thirds of the contributors are unknown to me, a "specialist" in American literature, may show the wisdom of the Zadie Smith strategy. I discovered at least two wonderful new young writers: Judy Budnitz and Stacey Richter.

Still, as a story about a burned child gives way to a story about a burned boyfriend, to a damaged arm, to abortion, to miscarriages and mammograms, to a blocked urethra, to attempted suicide, to a teenage boy ejaculating over Barbie and into a headless Ken, you have to wonder about editorial practice. Did Cassini and Testa type some conjunction of "burned", "death", "advertising", "gross" and "American short fiction" into their database and come up with this collection? Or does it say something about the American psyche? The collection appears to predate the September 11 terrorist attacks, and the Iraq adventure. But let us not forget Allen Ginsberg: "I am the Early Warning Radar System."

In an interview in 1995, Wallace spoke of how it felt to live in America: "There's something particularly sad about it. It manifests itself as a kind of lostness. Whether it's unique to our generation, I really don't know." What do they teach them in American colleges, in creative writing schools? How can Wallace forget what Gertrude Stein said, as reported by Ernest Hemingway: "You are all a lost generation"? What has happened to cultural memory? In all the thin here-and-nowness of this collection, something is missing. History. The Other. The Not-Me.

As I've mentioned many times, the BBC recordings are universally superb. The quality of the recordings is unmatched. And, typically the band takes the sessions very seriously. The major difference between these sessions and the official studio release is that the band is playing these songs live. They are mixed well and sound great but they are live, so you can catch occasional subtle differences.

The ten songs here span their career and are not played in chronological order. This allows all of these wonderful songs to play off the tensions of each other. And it shows that their later songs, which are less intense than their earlier ones, are still quite awesome and in a live setting don't really lack for intensity after all.

The highlight of this disc is the scorching eighteen minute version of "Like Herod"; The original is intense and amazing, and this live version allows them to play with the original in small ways, including allowing the quietness to really stretch out before they blow the speakers off the wall with the noise section of the track.

Even though I'm a fan of Mogwai, I don't hear a radical difference between these versions and the originals. Or should I say, it's obvious which song they are playing. There are some obvious subtleties and differences as befitting a live album, but unlike some live discs you don't immediately notice that this version is "live";

And that works well for both fans of the band (because as you listen and you hear the subtleties) and for newcomers (because you're not listening to weird, poorly recorded versions or versions that are for fans only). And so, you get ten great Mogwai tracks. Just enough to make you want to get some more.

I found this book when I was looking for other publications by Zadie Smith. This book kept cropping up in searches, but I could never really narrow down exactly what it was. As best as I can tell, it is a British version of a collection of American authors that was originally published in Italy (!). Editors Marco Cassini and Martina Testa work for minimum fax, an Italian independent publisher. In 2001, they somehow managed to collect stories from these young, fresh American authors into an Italian anthology (I can't tell if the stories were translated into Italian or not).

Then, Hamish Hamilton (publisher of Five Dials) decided to release a British version of the book. They got Zadie Smith to write the introduction (and apparently appended a story by Jonathan Safran Foer (which was not in the original, but which is in the Italian re-publication). This led to the new rather unwieldy title. It was not published in America, (all of the stories have appeared in some form magazine or anthology in America), but it's cool to have them all in one place.

The title must come from the David Foster Wallace story contained within: "Incarnations of Burned Children"; which is one of his most horrific stories, but it sets a kind of tone for the work that's included within (something which Zadie addresses in her introduction): why are these young successful American writers so sad? So be prepared, this is not a feel good anthology (although the stories are very good).

Zadie Smith was a fan of David Foster Wallace (she wrote a lengthy review of the ten-year anniversary of Brief Interviews with Hideous Men which is republished in her book Changing My Mind), so she is an ideal choice to introduce this book. Especially when she provides a quote from DFW's interview in 1995 about how living in America in the late 90s has a kind of "lostness" to it. With this in mind, she sets out the concerns of this collection of great stories: fear of death and advertising.

Zadie gives some wonderful insight into each of these stories. The introduction was designed to be read after the book, and I'm glad I waited because while she doesn't exactly spoil anything, she provides a wonderful perspective on each piece and also offers some ideas about the stories that I hadn't considered. And it's funny, too.

I have read this story several times and I wasn't going to read it again, but at the end of the book I decided to see how it fit in with the rest of the stories. And indeed, the tone of the story works well with the rest of the book (even if the contents themselves are pretty different). This story is a letter from a salesman addressing a woman's dissatisfaction with the I Can Speak

mask. As the letter grows in length, the craziness of the product really unveils itself, as does the creepy nature of the letter writer (and, frankly, of the company).

This is an incredibly dark story that opens up with a somewhat lighthearted-seeming scene of a woman prepping a chicken for dinner. Soon we learn more about the couple's past and how that chicken is something of a metaphor for their relationship. It gets uncomfortable very quickly and has been quite unforgettable.

This story follows two sisters as they try to help their mother (and father) cope with aging. The sisters take turns visiting their mother who has to go for medical appointments. But what is a sister to do if her mom refuses to go into the doctor's office? The story is poignant and awkward. It's very good. And the surprise twist at the end is really powerful.

This is the story of a young man's father. His father was a success and then a failure and the failures seem to keep coming. The failure of this story is of the titular timeshare: his father is trying to fix up an old hotel and make it ready for public purchase. But it is slow going, and there is very little in the way of capital or common sense at work. It is told from the point of view of the son, which is an interesting perspective on the failings of the father.