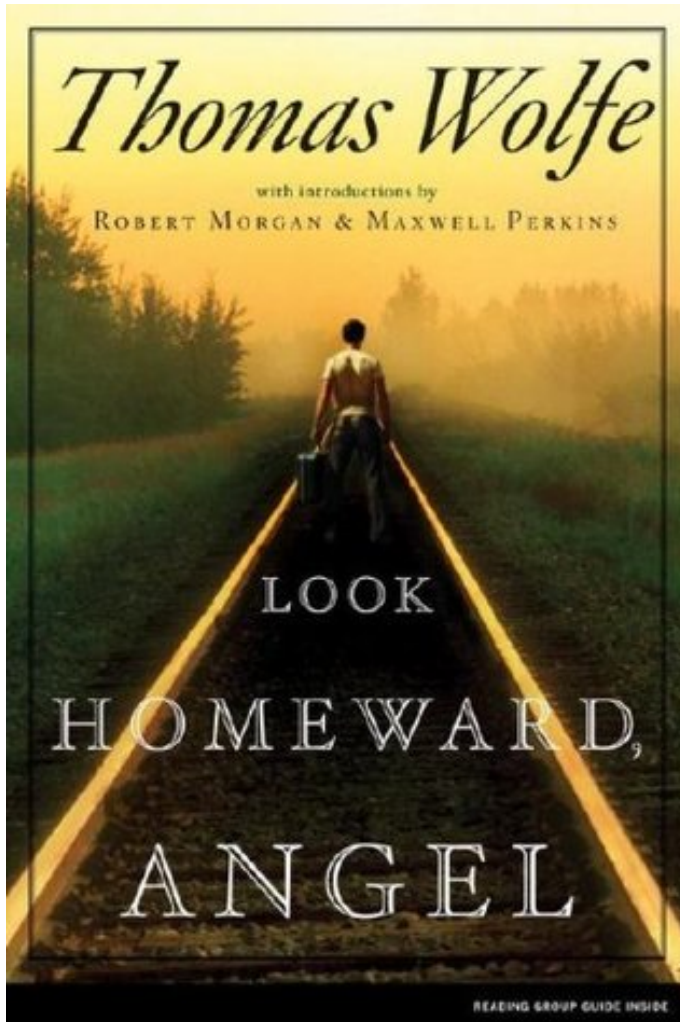

Thomas Wolfe

Look Homeward, Angel



Title: Look Homeward, Angel

Author: Thomas Wolfe

Format: Paperback

Language: English

Pages: 644

Publisher: , 0

ISBN: 0743297318

Format: PDF / Kindle / ePub

Size: 6.5 MB

Download: allowed

Description

The stunning, classic coming-of-age novel written by one of America's foremost Southern writers

A legendary author on par with William Faulkner and Flannery O'Connor, Thomas Wolfe published *Look Homeward, Angel*, his first novel, about a young man's burning desire to leave his small town and tumultuous family in search of a better life, in 1929. It gave the world proof of his genius and launched a powerful legacy.

The novel follows the trajectory of Eugene Gant, a brilliant and restless young man whose wanderlust and passion shape his adolescent years in rural North Carolina. Wolfe said that *Look Homeward, Angel* is "a book made out of my life," and his largely autobiographical story about the quest for a greater intellectual life has resonated with and influenced generations of readers, including some of today's most important novelists. Rich with lyrical prose and vivid characterizations, this twentieth-century American classic will capture the hearts and imaginations of every reader.

Insightful reviews

Reid: Read 104 pages and the reviews here - doesn't quite seem worth continuing for 400 more pages of tiny print. Cool to see some influence on Kerouac, for one. I'm giving his other classic a try... ah, will also try the pre-edited version of LHA called O Lost...

Ok, read O Lost through Part 1, page 176, and I'm disembarking from this train to nowhere? Haha, no, it's good, and I definitely enjoyed this more than LHA, with its humorous sarcasm left intact, but I'm not quite in the mood to continue with this mostly somber arc to death and loss.

He has some great poetic turns of phrase - I'd recommend the book to any writer - and he's insightfully descriptive of parts of psychologies. I may return to this at a later date when I can laugh in the face of depression, death and futility. Now back to Oscar Wao's lively depression, death and futility...

But first, a few quotes:

"The city made him feel his smallness, his unimportance. His vanity recoiled before the mockery of number."

"The unhastened years prowled in on leopard feet."

"... touched by that dark miracle of chance which makes new magic in a dusty world."

"It was the brisk morning of America - the time of the wakening eagle scream, the bright blare of the trombone, the brass age of empire... It was a happy time. Men asked no questions - they asserted."

A.: This book is my nemesis.

No, seriously: I've been trying to read it for almost six years. I've tried to read it in the spring, the summer, the fall, the winter -- on planes, on the bus, on the El, in Chicago, in Baltimore, in North Carolina. And every single time, I stall out about 60% of the way through.

Stargate: Atlantis fans think that John Sheppard's still trying to read War and Peace after three years in the Pegasus Galaxy; I *canonically* can't finish Look Homeward, Angel.

I know it shouldn't bother me -- I'm not really a big believer in there being books you *should* read, like classics; you should read what you want -- but it *does*. It bothers me because I'm a student (albeit an amateur) of Southern literature, and this is one of the big ones, right up there with all of Faulkner and [The Moviegoer](#) and [Kate Vaiden](#). In North Carolina, it's *the* big one.

And I just can't finish it.

I don't know if it's good, or bad, or simply hanging on by its academic reputation. All I know is that this book is the great challenge of my life, and I just bought a used copy at the public library, and I am going to finish this frelling book if it kills me.

David: sometimes books have to be read at a certain time in your life. for me. this one was the perfect end to college. i finished this two days after graduation. after all of my friends departed for points unknown or home. i was laying in the grass at fordham in the bronx with the sun shining and with the words my mother spoke to me when she dropped me off four years earlier. she said, you won't be back. and i told her i would. but reading this. finishing it in the grass in the bronx. with everyone who had been close to me gone, i knew she was right.

Jamie: Books are made from books and lots of a booklet has been made from this one. It lays this kind of brickwork, you're virtually obliged to learn it, fated. yet loving it? I couldn't, no longer quite. After the 1st 3rd i used to be loss of life for indicators of Philip Carey, discovering it so paltry and tricky after anything like Of Human Bondage. A metric ton of adjectives and a 10th of the ability or story. The ruinous Gants are strong memorable, though, and this is often the uncooked fabric for therefore many others. Thank you, Thomas Wolfe. "At last, idea Eugene, i get an education. This has to be solid writing, since it turns out so very dull. whilst it hurts, the dentist says, it does you good. Democracy has to be real, since it is so very earnest. It needs to be a certainty, since it is so elegantly embalmed during this marble mausoleum of language." Eugene, you ironist, you.

Conrad: the 1st line: "A future that leads from the English to the Dutch is unusual enough..." Oh, really? This publication has certainly no longer elderly well; he has little sympathy for those that are up to now outdoor the precise humans as not to be of English inventory - i might wager he suggestion being a Yankee good nigh unforgivable. That said, there is something haunting

approximately Wolfe's prose, which frequently reads kind of like prose poem: "Which people has no longer remained without end prison-pent? Which people isn't really without end a stranger and alone? O waste of loss, within the scorching mazes, between vibrant stars in this such a lot weary unbright cinder, lost! Remembering speechlessly we search the nice forgotten language, the misplaced lane-end into heaven, a stone, a leaf, an unfound door. Where? When?"

Matej Vidakovi?: Thomas Wolfe je pisac za razumijevanje njegovih djela je potrebno nešto i znati o dotičnome. Nije uvijek nužno poznavati privatni život pisca kada se želi promišljati i vrednovati ono što je napisao, ali u ovom slučaju, djelo je neodvojivo od osobe. Wolfe pripada onoj istoj generaciji američkih pisaca kojoj su pripadali i Hemingway, Faulkner, John Dos Passos i F.S.Fitzgerald. Pa ipak, on nikada nije imao gotovo ništa zajedničkog sa pripadnicima tzv. "izgubljene generacije". Istovremeno, Wolfe je vjerojatno jedan od najzapoštabljenijih velikih američkih pisaca (drugi, odmah do njega bi bio John Fante). Wolfe, dijete američkog Juga, u svojim djelima polazi od postavke da je svaka ozbiljna književnost autobiografska i vodi se tom logikom ispisujući počinak svojeg životnog djela, ovu obiteljsku kroniku, istovremeno i roman o odrastanju dječaka Eugenea Ganta (koji je ustvari Wolfe sam). Opsesija američke književnosti (vjerojatno se tu kriju neki zaostali kolonijalni kompleksi) oduvijek je bila pisanje "velikog američkog romana", tj. stvaranje panoramske sage koja će obuhvatiti cijelu Ameriku u njenoj beskonačnosti i positioned određene obitelji kroz njene širine i dužine. Iako su se pojavili pisci koji su u svoje vrijeme tom žanru zaista podarili nekoliko "velikih" američkih romana, poput Steinbecka ili Faulknera, moderna američka kritika je dokazala da još uvijek nije nadišla bolesno traženje novog "velikog američkog obiteljskog romana", kad je takvim romanima krstila sapunice Jonathana Franzena ili Michaela Chabona. No, ostavimo se sada toga... Thomas Wolfe bio je uvijek nemjerljivih stvaralčkih mogućnosti oko kojih se doslovce ispredala legenda. A legenda je išla otprilike ovako: Wolfe piše od popodneva, pa cijelu noć. Soba mu izgleda kao rusvaj, puna pepeljara sa opušcima, ispisanih stranica, razbacanih knjiga... zatim pada u san. Onda ustaje, izlazi na ulicu, obilato jede odreske i upada u manje razgovor sa prvom osobom na koju naiđe. Zatim se opet vraća u svoj sobi i ponovno piše. Njegovo djelo je ustvari velika autobiografska saga, njegov vlastiti život mitologiziran do razine antičke tragedije. Prvi njegov roman, upravo ovaj koji sada recenziram, donio mu je veliku slavu i priznanja. No, istovremeno i uzburkao duhove kod kuće na jugu, jer su se ljudi koje je opisao prepoznali, a to ime se baš nije svidjelo. Nakon ovoga uslijedili su ostali romani: "Of Time and River", "The internet and The Rock" i "You cannot cross domestic Again" koji su ustvari svi jedan veliki ogroman roman, život Thomasa Wolfea predan bezbrojnim stranicama. Kritika Wolfeu nije bila pretjerano sklona... najviše mu zamjera subjektivnost u opisu likova i to što njegovi romani nemaju nekakvu vrstu strukturu. Odlaze toliko daleko da njegova djela nazivaju "grandioznim sranjem". Iskreno, Wolfeovo djelo bi vjerojatno zaslužilo osrednju prolaznu ocjenu i ostatak na prašnoj polici klasika koji baš nisu rado čitani, da nije jedne stvari, a to je Wolfeov jezik. Njegovom načinu izražavanja se često zamjeralo da je pretjeran, prepun brbljanja, razbarušen, da se previše govori, a premalo kaže... Struktura romana zaista često je razmrvljena i previše skače, tako da se čitatelj gubi, a to što je roman pisan u trećem licu samo zbunjuje čitatelja. Jer, naime, od početka je jasno kako se radi o autobiografskoj priči, i kako je ova priča nedjeljiva od svojeg autora, pa bi stoga bilo logičnije da je napisana u prvom licu, no, budući da roman prati i ostale članove velike obitelji, vjerojatno u tome leži Wolfeova odluka da roman ispriča kao da se radi o nekome drugome, a ne o njemu samome. Na kraju... što ustvari reči... Thomas Wolfe bio je uvijek koji je rano napustio ovaj svijet. Sa svega 38 godina. Načitan,

obrazovan, kažu da se jednostavno nije mogao zaustaviti kad bi jednom počeo pisati, da je u toku tjedna ispisivao i do 20 000 riječi i da su njegovi rukopisi odvoženi izdavaču malenim kamionom (nijedan Wolfeov roman nije kraći od six hundred stranica). Čitajuči Wolfeovu prozu, uvijek zaista i stječe dojam da je taj uvijek pisao u jednom dahu. Poetski jezik whitmanovske Amerike odzvanja kroz svaku rečenicu, nemoguće je kod Wolfea odijeliti individualca od općenitog koncepta Vječnosti kao takve. On svojim pisanjem želi obuhvatiti vrijeme i svijet od početka do kraja, on želi strpati "zauvijek" i "nekad" i "sada" unutar korica jedne knjige. Kako piše na prvim stranicama knjige "ono što je započelo prije četiri tisuće godina na Kreti, završava se upravo veeras, negdje u Americi". I upravo to...ta strast koja isijava iz ovog uvijek istovremeno je i najveća mana i ono najveličanstvenije i najvrijednije kod ovog romana, i kod Wolfea općenito. Pjesnički monolozi ponekad nagrizaju tkivo romana, kao takvog, a s druge strane, puni su predivne ljepote....isti lirizam je gotovo pročišćujuć za čitatelja kojemu je duša otvorena i koji je spreman zgrabiti Wolfea za ruku i zaputiti se s njim kroz dušu i beskraj života koji opisuje. Zaključak koji se nameće na kraju, beskrajno je ustvari tragičan u svojoj biti. Thomas Wolfe bio je pisac ogromnog plamena, vatre, pisac koji je izgarao i živio da piše, i da nam približi Zlatni Beskraj Vječnosti koja šumi u nama i oko nas...upravo ta želja i nesputana bujica kreativnosti koju nikad nije uspio ukrotiti su prokletstvo zbog kojeg nikada nije preskočio sve zamjerke svojih suvremenika i zaista se svrstao na panteon američke književnosti. I zaista...kad je ispisao svoju priču, kad je izbacio iz sebe svu onu strast i nemir koji je nosio u sebi, kroz svoje opsežne, lirske romane...umro je Thomas Wolfe...i danas ga malo tko čita...tog pritajenog svetca i mučenika američke književnosti...čiji izgubljenici i utvare lutaju i našim životima...upravo onako, kako ih je Wolfe opisao prije stotinjak godina.

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