



What We Talk About When We Talk About Love: Stories

By *Raymond Carver*



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In his second collection, including the iconic and much-referenced title story featured in the Academy Award-winning film *Birdman*, Carver establishes his reputation as one of the most celebrated short-story writers in American literature—a haunting meditation on love, loss, and companionship, and finding one's way through the dark.



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What We Talk About When We Talk About Love: Stories By Raymond Carver Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #12618 in Books
- Brand: Vintage
- Published on: 1989-06-18
- Released on: 1989-06-18
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .46" w x 5.14" l,
- Binding: Paperback
- 176 pages

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

"What We Talk About When We Talk About Love" is not only the most well-known short story title of the latter part of the 20th century; it has come to stand for an entire aesthetic, the bare-bones prose style for which Raymond Carver became famous. Perhaps, it could be argued, *too* famous, at least for his fiction's own good. Like those of Hemingway or any other writer similarly loved, imitated, parodied, and reviled, these stories can sometimes produce the sense of reading pastiche. "A man without hands came to the door to sell me a photograph of my house." "That morning she pours Teacher's over my belly and licks it off. That afternoon she tries to jump out the window." "My friend Mel McGinnis was talking. Mel is a cardiologist, and sometimes that gives him the right." What other writer ever produced first sentences like these? They are like doors into Carverworld, where everyone speaks in simple declarative phrases, no one ever stops at one beer, and failure or violence are the true outcomes of the American dream.

Yet these stories bear careful re-reading, like any truly important and enduring work. For one thing, Carver is one of the few writers who can make desperation--cutting your ex-wife's telephone cord in the middle of a conversation, standing on your own roof chunking rocks while a man with no hands takes your picture--deeply *funny*. Then there is the sheer craft that went into their creation. Despite their seeming simplicity, his tales are as artfully constructed as poems--and like poems, the best of them can make your breath catch in your throat. In the title piece, for instance, after the gin has been drunk, after the stories have been told, after the tensions in the room have come to the surface and subsided again, there comes a moment of strange lightness and peace: "I could hear my heart beating. I could hear everyone's heart. I could hear the human noise we sat there making, not one of us moving, not even when the room went dark."

Much of what happens in *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* (1981) happens offstage, and we're left with tragedy's props: booze, instant coffee, furniture from a failed marriage, cigarettes smoked in the middle of the night. This is not merely a matter of technique. Carver leaves out a great deal, but that's only a measure of his characters' vulnerability, the nerve endings his stories lay bare. To say anything more, one feels, would simply hurt too much. --*Mary Park*

Review

"Carver's fiction is so spare in manner that it takes a time before one realizes how completely a whole culture and a whole moral condition is represented by even the most seemingly slight sketch. This second volume of stories is clearly the work of a full-grown master." —Frank Kermode

"Raymond Carver's America is...clouded by pain and the loss of dreams, but it is not as fragile as it looks. It is a place of survivors and a place of stories.... [Carver] has done what many of the most gifted writers fail to do: He has invented a country of his own, like no other except that very world, as Wordsworth said, which is the world to all of us." —Michael Wood, front page, *The New York Times Book Review*

"Splendid.... The collection as a whole, unlike most, begins to grow and resonate in a wonderful cumulative effect." —Tim O'Brien, *Chicago Tribune Book World*

"Carver not only enchants, he convinces." —J.D. Reed, *Time*

From the Inside Flap

In his second collection of stories, as in his first, Carver's characters are peripheral people--people without education, insight or prospects, people too unimaginative to even give up. Carver celebrates these men and women.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Harvey Sanchez:

Reading a publication can be one of a lot of exercise that everyone in the world likes. Do you like reading book consequently. There are a lot of reasons why people love it. First reading a book will give you a lot of new details. When you read a guide you will get new information due to the fact book is one of many ways to share the information or their idea. Second, reading through a book will make an individual more imaginative. When you looking at a book especially tale fantasy book the author will bring that you imagine the story how the characters do it anything. Third, you can share your knowledge to other folks. When you read this What We Talk About When We Talk About Love: Stories, you may tells your family, friends in addition to soon about yours reserve. Your knowledge can inspire the others, make them reading a guide.

Robert Olsen:

Reading a reserve tends to be new life style in this particular era globalization. With reading through you can get a lot of information that may give you benefit in your life. With book everyone in this world can share their idea. Guides can also inspire a lot of people. Plenty of author can inspire all their reader with their story as well as their experience. Not only the storyplot that share in the books. But also they write about advantage about something that you need example. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your young ones, there are many kinds of book that you can get now. The authors in this world always try to improve their ability in writing, they also doing some exploration before they write with their book. One of them is this What We Talk About When We Talk About Love: Stories.

Gertrude Ponder:

This What We Talk About When We Talk About Love: Stories is great guide for you because the content which is full of information for you who also always deal with world and possess to make decision every minute. This book reveal it information accurately using great arrange word or we can state no rambling sentences within it. So if you are read this hurriedly you can have whole information in it. Doesn't mean it only gives you straight forward sentences but hard core information with lovely delivering sentences. Having What We Talk About When We Talk About Love: Stories in your hand like obtaining the world in your arm, info in it is not ridiculous just one. We can say that no book that offer you world throughout ten or fifteen tiny right but this reserve already do that. So , this really is good reading book. Hi Mr. and Mrs. busy do you still doubt which?

Verna Krell:

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