



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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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:

Douglas Quintanar:

Have you spare time for a day? What do you do when you have far more or little spare time? Yep, you can choose the suitable activity to get spend your time. Any person spent their own spare time to take a walk, shopping, or went to typically the Mall. How about open or even read a book eligible What We Talk About When We Talk About Love: Stories? Maybe it is being best activity for you. You already know beside you can spend your time together with your favorite's book, you can more intelligent than before. Do you agree with the opinion or you have additional opinion?

Jeremy Gable:

Hey guys, do you wants to finds a new book to learn? May be the book with the name What We Talk About When We Talk About Love: Stories suitable to you? The particular book was written by famous writer in this era. The particular book untitled What We Talk About When We Talk About Love: Stories is the main one of several books this everyone read now. This specific book was inspired lots of people in the world. When you read this guide you will enter the new shape that you ever know ahead of. The author explained their concept in the simple way, thus all of people can easily to comprehend the core of this e-book. This book will give you a wide range of information about this world now. So you can see the represented of the world with this book.

Diane Merryman:

What We Talk About When We Talk About Love: Stories can be one of your beginning books that are good idea. Most of us recommend that straight away because this book has good vocabulary that may increase your knowledge in terminology, easy to understand, bit entertaining but still delivering the information. The article writer giving his/her effort to get every word into joy arrangement in writing What We Talk About When We Talk About Love: Stories although doesn't forget the main place, giving the reader the hottest as well as based confirm resource information that maybe you can be one among it. This great information can certainly drawn you into brand new stage of crucial imagining.

Abigail Shelton:

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