



Autobiography of Red

By Anne Carson

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Autobiography of Red By Anne Carson

The award-winning poet reinvents a genre in a stunning work that is both a novel and a poem, both an unconventional re-creation of an ancient Greek myth and a wholly original coming-of-age story set in the present.

Geryon, a young boy who is also a winged red monster, reveals the volcanic terrain of his fragile, tormented soul in an autobiography he begins at the age of five. As he grows older, Geryon escapes his abusive brother and affectionate but ineffectual mother, finding solace behind the lens of his camera and in the arms of a young man named Herakles, a cavalier drifter who leaves him at the peak of infatuation. When Herakles reappears years later, Geryon confronts again the pain of his desire and embarks on a journey that will unleash his creative imagination to its fullest extent. By turns whimsical and haunting, erudite and accessible, richly layered and deceptively simple, *Autobiography of Red* is a profoundly moving portrait of an artist coming to terms with the fantastic accident of who he is.

A NEW YORK TIMES NOTABLE BOOK OF THE YEAR
National Book Critics Circle Award Finalist

"Anne Carson is, for me, the most exciting poet writing in English today." --
Michael Ondatje

"This book is amazing--I haven't discovered any writing in years so marvelously disturbing." --Alice Munro

"A profound love story . . . sensuous and funny, poignant, musical and tender." --
The New York Times Book Review

"A deeply odd and immensely engaging book. . . . [Carson] exposes with passionate force the mythic underlying the explosive everyday." --The Village Voice

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Anne Carson's *Autobiography of Red* is a novel in verse, the author's first. A classicist by profession as well as a poet, Carson has drawn on antiquity for her cast, updating the myth of Geryon and Herakles. In the original version, of course, Herakles killed the red-skinned, winged Geryon. In Carson's very contemporary retelling, he merely inspires, but does not return, the monster's passion. By choosing Geryon as her central character, Carson can bring up the questions of existence as if they hadn't been asked before. After all, the monster's instincts have not been numbed by civilization. Fires twist through him. We feel the pain of learning the most elementary things, and then the volcanic intensity that comes with that more advanced thing, love. Yet Carson doesn't so much tell the story of Geryon's love as mediate his very being through semiological surfaces: cafes, video stores, lipstick, a library where he shelves government documents with a "forlorn austerity, / tall and hushed in their ranges as veterans of a forgotten war." Carson seldom satisfies herself with an image of the world. Instead she atomizes the world, leaving it broken down, refracted, and glinting. At times her verbal pyrotechnics manage to render pure *energy*:

A little button at the end of each range activated the fluorescent track above it.
A yellowing 5 x 7 index card
Scotch-taped below each button said EXTINGUISH LIGHT WHEN NOT IN USE.
Geryon went flickering
through the ranges like a bit of mercury flipping the switches on and off.
The librarians thought him
a talented boy with a shadow side.

No novelist could have gotten away with that last line. Yet it's very much to the point: Carson's Geryon is, among other things, a camera freak who doesn't understand that an observer must inevitably alter the nature of the thing observed. Here is Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, cheek-by-jowl with the ancients! And indeed, Carson's achievement is to interweave the archaic and the modern so seamlessly that by the time we finish reading *Autobiography of Red*, the entire landscape looks inside out. --Mark Rudman

From Library Journal

Is it poetry? Is it a novel in verse? A fable? A myth? However you define Carson's distinctive and wildly inventive new work, it is riveting reading. At the center of the narrative is a winged red monster named Geryon; throughout, we see him struggling with his family, falling for the indifferent Herakles, and discovering photography as a means of comfort and escape. Wistful yet whimsical, offhand yet intense, funky yet erudite (Carson, a classics professor at McGill, grounds this work in ancient Greek myth), this is a reading experience like no other.

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From Booklist

The title says *autobiography*; the subtitle, *novel*; and an inner title page reads "A Romance." Go with the last, for Carson recasts the Greek legend of Geryon, the red, winged monster that Herakles killed during his tenth labor. Names, wings, and some mythical details remain, but the setting is contemporary. Geryon, 14, meets Herakles, 16, and it's love at first sight. Life separates them, but they meet again when Geryon, now 22, literally runs into Herakles in Buenos Aires. Herakles and a colleague (and lover), scouting volcanoes for a film, whisk Geryon to the Andes, where his wings may cause him to be taken for an immortal. There the story breaks off. The start of another fantasy trilogy? Hardly, for although we know the story's end, it is not

in the source, an ancient poem that now exists only in fragments. Instead, Carson interviews the poet, Stesichoros (*circa* 630[–]555 B.C.), about his vision (he may have been blinded by Helen of Troy). Narratively, philosophically, humorously, a dazzling performance. Oh, yes: it's a poem. *Ray Olson*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Tanisha Goss:

Reading a e-book tends to be new life style in this era globalization. With reading through you can get a lot of information that can give you benefit in your life. Having book everyone in this world may share their idea. Publications can also inspire a lot of people. Lots of author can inspire their very own reader with their story or maybe their experience. Not only the storyplot that share in the guides. But also they write about the data about something that you need illustration. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your young ones, there are many kinds of book which exist now. The authors on earth always try to improve their proficiency in writing, they also doing some study before they write to their book. One of them is this Autobiography of Red.

Rudy Nixon:

As we know that book is essential thing to add our understanding for everything. By a publication we can know everything we want. A book is a set of written, printed, illustrated as well as blank sheet. Every year seemed to be exactly added. This guide Autobiography of Red was filled regarding science. Spend your time to add your knowledge about your technology competence. Some people has various feel when they reading a book. If you know how big selling point of a book, you can experience enjoy to read a e-book. In the modern era like at this point, many ways to get book that you simply wanted.

David Rutherford:

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Anthony Muller:

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