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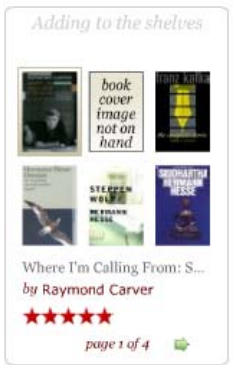
Tobias Wolff: Our Story Begins
Selected stories from his other collections, plus ten new stories that have appeared in various magazines. Is it worth the cover price for ten new stories? Does a bear shit in the woods?

Howard Rosenthal: Encyclopedia of Counseling



Elizabeth D. Samet:
Soldier's Heart:
Reading Literature
Through Peace and
War at West Point
I don't usually go for military non-fiction, but this one's interesting.

READS, GOOD AND OTHERWISE



Adding to the shelves
book cover image not on hand
Where I'm Calling From: S...
by Raymond Carver
★★★★★
page 3 of 4

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QUOTATIONAL

Matthew's favorite quotes
"Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body."— Joseph Addison
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January 17, 2008

Proust, Blanchot, and a Woman in Red.

I've been carrying around Lydia Davis' recent cahier, released through Sylph Editions, that was talked about a few sites late last year. After reading her recent *Varieties of Disturbance* I've resolved to track down her other work; her writing is the most precise I've seen. Each piece is, to borrow a phrase, an extraordinary machine. Folks interested in translation would do well to order a copy.

Part one is an "Alphabet of Proust Translation Problems" (her recent edition of *Swann's Way* has been widely praised) and it's fascinating, a real treat for word freaks - Davis' attention to the right word at the right time is explored here in process, and it warrants a release of the "full alphabet" (only a few letters, and the words being translated, are highlighted here) in some form.

Part two is brief, but Davis discusses her difficulty - pleasurable difficulty - in summarizing, for translation, Maurice Blanchot's *The One Who Was Standing Apart From Me*.

Here is one perfectly accurate summary, though a brief one: 'In a house in the southern part of some country, a man goes from room to room being asked the question 'Are you writing now?' by another character who may or may not exist'. This summary would not be appropriate for commercial release.

Well, sold me on it. Sounds like my morning. She also has this to say about translating Blanchot:

The experience of translating the essays was one of the most difficult I ever had, in translating. As though the experience were, in fact, a piece of fiction by Blanchot, the meaning of a difficult phrase or sentence would often become a physical entity that eluded me, my brain becoming both the pursuer and the arena in which the pursuit took place. Understanding became an intensely physical act.

Marry me! Part three has a bit of whimsy to it - a compendium of dreams, those had while asleep and awake, the awake ones being situations that took on a dreamlike quality for reasons inherent to the situation - an odd exchange, something circular, strange and odd. They are listed and briefly described without any indication of what category they fall into. Except from loved ones, there are few things less interesting than hearing about someone's dreams - oh, you flew last night and the ground below was covered with candy bars that were dancing? *great* - but you know Davis is going to give you more than that. Not quite stories, but not entirely unlike a little bit of literary David Lynch-manship, stripped of the horrific turns he sometimes puts out there. Again, worthy of a publication all its own, and this cahier is worth tracking down.

January 17, 2008 | [Permalink](#)

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2008



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Woman in Red.:

Comments

Oooooh. Davis is my very favourite writer, hands down. I can never get enough of her. Where'd you get that cahier?

Posted by: [Stephany Aulenback](#) | [January 17, 2008 at 01:29 PM](#)

Oooooh. Davis is my very favourite writer, hands down. I can never get enough of her. Where'd you get that cahier?

Posted by: [Stephany Aulenback](#) | [January 17, 2008 at 01:30 PM](#)

Direct from Sylph Editions - <http://www.sylpheditions.com/>

I've been saving "The End of the Story" for when I want something exceptional - have you read it?

Posted by: [Matthew Tiffany](#) | [January 17, 2008 at 01:35 PM](#)

Yes, I have read it and I enjoyed it. It's very neurotic, though. Sort of stressful and emotionally exhausting to read. I'm sure she meant it to be all of those things. I much prefer her shorter stuff.

Posted by: [Stephany Aulenback](#) | [January 18, 2008 at 11:40 AM](#)

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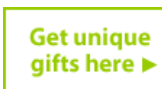
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