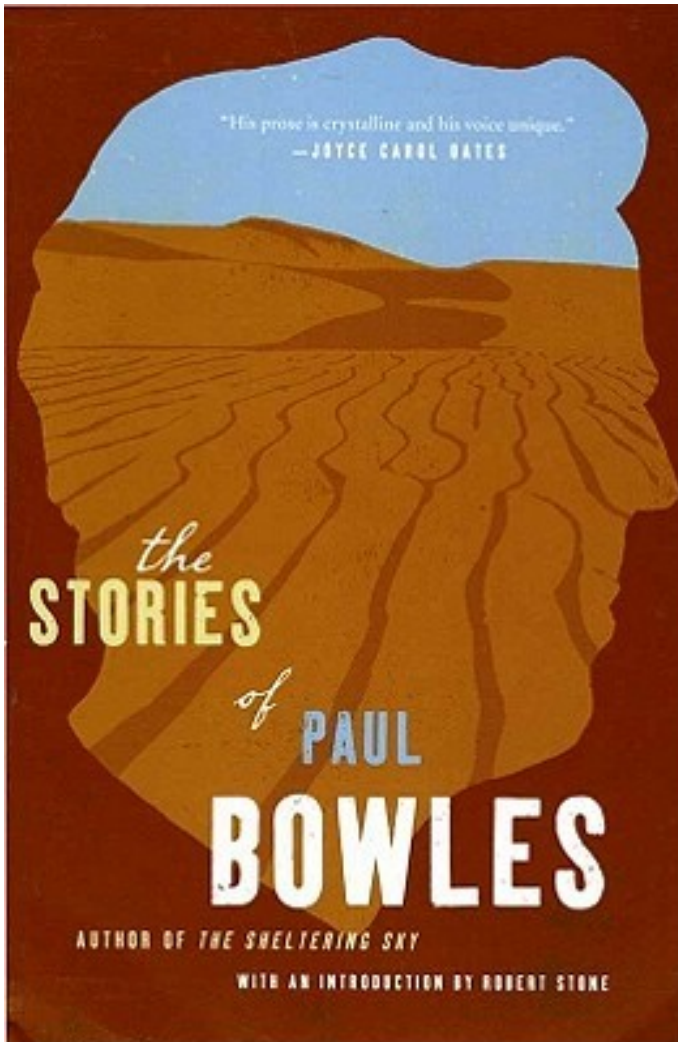

Paul Bowles

The Stories of Paul Bowles



Title: The Stories of Paul Bowles

Author: Paul Bowles

Format: ebook

Language: English

Pages: 680

Publisher: HarperCollins e-books,
1293490800

ISBN: 0062004492

Format: PDF / Kindle / ePub

Size: 5.3 MB

Download: allowed

Description

The short fiction of American literary cult figure Paul Bowles is marked by a unique, delicately spare style, and a dark, rich, exotic mood, by turns chilling, ironic, and wry—possessing a symmetry between beauty and terror that is haunting and ultimately moral. In "Pastor Dowe at Tecaté," a Protestant missionary is sent to a faraway place where his God has no power. In "Call at Corazón," an American husband abandons his alcoholic wife on their honeymoon in a South American jungle. In "Allal," a boy's drug-induced metamorphosis into a deadly serpent leads to his violent death. Here also are some of Bowles's most famous works, including "The Delicate Prey," a grimly satisfying tale of vengeance, and "A Distant Episode," which Tennessee Williams proclaimed "a masterpiece."

Insightful reviews

Christopher Hawkes: There's something terminally estranged about Paul Bowles' stories. Very well-written and effective in what they do but the nihilism gets a bit single-note after a while. In omnibus form you get the gist quick and it's a bold reader that keeps going. I jumped ship after the one where the murderer/thief/rapist gets buried up to his neck and left in the sand. How many images like that do you need floating around in your head?

Paul: Everyone is aware of the great beat writers, Kerouac, Ginsberg, Kesey, but few are hip to Paul Bowles, an expatriate American living in Mexico, Morocco, and Europe. He and his wife Jane wrote some of the greatest novels never read.

As a writer, Bowles uses setting and circumstance to unsettle the reader. He typically describes nothing of the characters' physical appearance, leaving the reader to actually use his or her imagination.

For another perspective on Beat writing, Paul Bowles offers the outsider looking into America.

Heather Shaw: I like to have several books at once on my bedside table. Here's one that's been hanging on. (Actually, it's not this book, it's a Selected Works edition.) Almost ditched it when I finished with the travel writing -- I had a hard time getting past the amount of luggage he seemed to need to haul around. Then, the bio pages of his childhood really turned me off, as most "exceptional" early childhood bios do. Read the novella, "Too Far From Home" and was disappointed. It's a good story, but it's too thin. The language isn't adequate to the story. Then... THEN, I read the short story about three leather workers who leave one place by camel to travel to a market. They're duped into accepting a stranger into their midst, who ultimately kills all three of them -- the last in a distinctively horrible manner. The murderer/thief, however, gets his reward on earth from some tribal members of the slain, as well as the connivance of the French authorities. This is a story that could have appeared in the "Shorts" column of a newspaper, and Bowles' telling of it is dry. Rather, it is perfect to the subject. Perfectly chilling.

Greg: i will not give some thought to a person who writes extra strikingly than Bowles of The Self (often, yet now not always, an aesthetic Westerner) coming face-to-face with The Other.

Other-ness, in Bowles's stories, features like Nietzsche's void: while it really is stared into by way of a protagonist, prodded or investigated or maybe ostensibly subjugated, it really is regularly staring correct again — ready to infiltrate the protagonist, to blow up her or him from the inside. In his advent to this version of the amassed stories, Robert Stone writes of a undeniable "something missing" that many readers of Bowles declare to feel, and to recoil at. We "trade sympathy for the absence of ordinariness," Stone writes. It is greater than that, though. If there's a unmarried universe or sensibility uniting those stories, it is one within which the opposite is completely corrosive to the Self. It isn't that Bowles has left empathy out of those stories, it is that he constructs tales within which empathy is impossible. There's a coldness here, a repetitive cruelty, that made those tales tough for me to learn at times. So possibly my giving those tales 4 stars rather than 5 is extra a mirrored image of my very own tastes and ideology than it truly is of the icy strength of Bowles's art. I would argue, though, that for the entire "absence of ordinariness" Bowles offers us in setting, character, and plot, in topic he moves an analogous few notes repeatedly — moves them beautifully, masterfully, no doubt, yet I felt a undeniable monotony nonetheless.

Rick Slane: American lives in Tangier-writes approximately far-off lands dispassionately

Rupert: considered one of my favourite all time books. A lot of those tales are natural atmosphere, yet it is surroundings so thick you could climb in and flow round in them. You could think the creeping of time and the richness of air.

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