



The Best American Short Stories 1995

Jane Smiley (Editor), Katrina Kenison, Gish Jen (Contributor)

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Every autumn, readers of short stories eagerly look forward to the chance to discover their favorite writers and new talents in The Best American Short Stories. Last year's collection marched on to bestseller lists across the country and met with acclaim from critics who declared it "a brilliant work of art." Marking the eightieth anniversary of the series, the 1995 volume portrays the stunning range of American life in all its various colors, styles, regions, and concerns. This year's guest editor, Jane Smiley, selected stories without knowing their authors' identities. Drawn to tales with "a sharp taste," she gathered a piquant sampling of new voices as well as rich works by such masters as Don DeLillo, Ellen Gilchrist, Thom Jones, Joy Williams, Stephen Dobyns, Kate Braverman, and Jamaica Kincaid. Smiley was attracted to "an element of the exotic" in the tapestry of ordinary lives, and the stories in this collection reveal the powerful dramas constantly unfolding beneath the surface

The Best American Short Stories 1995 Details

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Download and Read Free Online The Best American Short Stories 1995 Jane Smiley (Editor) , Katrina Kenison , Gish Jen (Contributor)

From Reader Review The Best American Short Stories 1995 for online ebook

Konrad says

Favorite of the bunch:

Daniel Orozco - Orientation
Peter Ho Davies - The Ugliest House in the World
Edward J. Delaney - The Drowning
Don DeLillo - The Angel Esmeralda
Edward Falco - The Artist

Which suggests I am a sucker for short stories with titles beginning with the definite article 'the,' but let it be known, other "The ____" short stories in the collection, Ellen Gilchrist - The Stucco House & Andrea Barrett - The Behavior of the Hawkweeds, left very little impression at all. But 4 out of 6 is a great batting average (extra innings of course).

Will says

I am unsure of whether these stories are best when read in the order in which they're presented, but on the whole, they are worth reading. For the most part, they are well-written, structurally varied and deeply felt pieces that have to do with slightly skewed everyday situations. Though there is a sadness to them, stories like Max Garland's "Chiromancy" and Andrea Barrett's "The Behavior of the Hawkweeds" have some of the best development I've seen. A list of the stories included is as follows:

- * "Orientation" by David Orozco
- "Way Down Deep in the Jungle" by Thom Jones
- "The Stucco House" by Ellen Gilchrist
- "A Night's Work" by Jaimy Gordon
- "Pity" by Avner Mandelman
- * "Leg" by Steven Polansky
- * "The Ugliest House in the World" by Peter Ho Davies
- "Birthmates" by Gish Jen
- "The Drowning" by Edward Delaney
- "Honored Guest" by Joy Williams
- * "The Behavior of the Hawkweeds" by Andrea Barrett
- "Hand Jive" by Andrew Cozine
- "So I Guess You Know What I Told Him" by Stephen Dobyns
- "Undertow" by Jennifer C. Cornell
- * "Pagan Night" by Kate Braverman
- * "First, Body" by Melanie Rae Thon
- "The Angel Esmeralda" by Don DeLillo
- "The Artist" by Edward Falco
- * "Chiromancy" by Max Garland
- * "Xuela" by Jamaica Kincaid

* Personal Favorites

Cathy says

Jane Smiley Editor
Orientation Daniel Orozco
Way down deep in the jungle Thom Jones
Hand jive Andrew Cozine
First, body Melaine Rae Thon

Jane says

Sadly, it appears that Jane Smiley and I are not destined to become book buddies, as her tastes don't quite seem to match up with mine. I enjoyed "Orientation" (Daniel Orozco), "The Stucco House" (Ellen Gilchrist), "Leg" (Steven Polansky), "The Ugliest House in the World" (Peter Ho Davies), "Birthmates" (Gish Jen), "Pagan Night" (Kate Braverman), "First, Body" (Melanie Rae Thon), and "The Artist" (Edward Falco). That's 8/20 of the stories. The rest were more-or-less duds, or worse-- I don't remember anything about them.

Stephen Dorneman says

Another solid Best American collection. Despite the editor's occasional favoring of quirk (Andrew Cozine's "Hand Jive") or beauty of language (Jennifer Cornell's "Undertow," Jamaica Kincaid's "Xuela") over story, there's plenty to appreciate here that will stick with you long after the quirks and beauties are forgotten.

My personal favorites were: Edward Falco's "The Artist," the story of not-quite-a-marital-indiscretion told from two very different, both complex, perspectives; Kate Braverman's "Pagan Night," a deep dive into a mother's state of being as it becomes more and more logical and likely that she will kill or abandon her infant child; and Gish Jen's "Birthmates," on the surface the story of a down, but not yet out, salesman in a dying industry but underneath -- well, the same. Only much deeper.

Recommended.

Kate Sweeney says

Just finished the Ellen Gilchrist story, and for these 20 pages or so alone, I am extraordinarily glad that I picked this up for a couple dollars at a used bookstore. I'd have bought it new.

Tanya says

I like short stories. In fact I know I have read others in the past from the same series but from other years. In this book, my favorite story would have to be the first one with a "First day on the Job". Very funny and yet sometimes very true.

Casey Hampton says

Perhaps Jane Smiley and I just have a different feel for Story.

I can't explain it, well, this isn't exactly true but I think my explanation might only be interesting to me, but most all (not all) of these stories were a blade turning me out, turning me away.

Kathleen says

I love reading short stories. Most of the ones in this version were quite well written.

Eric says

The short story *First Day on the Job* is hilarious.

Kelly Paprocki says

Excellent

Peter Ho Davies The Ugliest House in the World

Gish Jen Birthmates

Jennifer C Cornell Undertow

Joy Williams Honored Guest

Great

Edward J Delaney The Drowning

Stephen Dobyns So I Guess You Know What I Told Him

Andrew Cozine Hand Jive

Steven Polansky Leg

Thom Jones Way Down Deep in the Jungle

Ryan says

Jane Smiley takes the reins this time around. In a preemptive half-apology, she declares upfront that she's not a particularly determined reader and that she traditionally avoids short stories(!). However, determined or not, she's still a fine reader with strong preferences--in her own words, "[the] peppery flavor of the strange or exotic," "wit," and "a vigorous storyline"--and so her editorial turn plays out in more-or-less the typical manner, with a lot of decent stories and some truly excellent ones.

Favorites of the bunch:

- * Andrea Barrett - "The Behavior of the Hawkweeds"
- * Edward J. Delaney - "The Drowning"
- * Jaimy Gordon - "A Night's Work"
- * Gish Jen - "Birthmates"
- * Jamaica Kincaid - "Xuela"

Honorable mentions:

- * Don DeLillo - "The Angel Esmeralda"
- * Steven Polansky - "Leg"
