



Grit Lit: A Rough South Reader

Brian Carpenter (Editor) , Tom Franklin (Editor)

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Drawing on storytelling traditions as old as southern literature itself, Grit Lit is the first anthology devoted to contemporary writing about the Rough South. From literary legends to emerging voices, the acclaimed writers featured in this collection view their hardscrabble South without romanticism or false nostalgia, not through moonlight and magnolia but moonshine and Marlboros.

This is the dirty South as captured by those rooted in its land yet able to share its stories with candor and courage. Grit Lit guides readers through tales both tall and true, intoxicating stories of loss, violence, failure, feuds, family, and--above all--survival against the odds. Raw and raucous, Grit Lit gathers some of the most provocative writing to come out of the South in the last thirty years. With a preface by Edgar Award-winning author Tom Franklin and Brian Carpenter's introduction to the genre's origins and influences, this bold anthology lays bare the Rough South in all its battered glory and dares readers not to stare in awe.

Grit Lit: A Rough South Reader Details

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Author : Brian Carpenter (Editor) , Tom Franklin (Editor)

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Download and Read Free Online Grit Lit: A Rough South Reader Brian Carpenter (Editor) , Tom Franklin (Editor)

From Reader Review Grit Lit: A Rough South Reader for online ebook

sappho_reader says

A good reference to find "new to you" authors but I found the introduction very problematic. I've read it three times over the past several years and it still bothers me.

Blue Cypress Books says

Guns, dogs, deeply dysfunctional families, trucks, men, drinking, violence. The stories individually were exceptional; all together they became overwhelming.

Jacob Mosier says

Excellent book, there was not a story that I did not like. In my opinion the two pieces from Harry Crews, the selections from Dorothy Allison, and the story "Where Will You Go When Your Skin Cannot Contain You," were the highlights.

Karen Hill says

Who knew I've always been a grit lit fan? I guess it started with John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath in English 101 back in 1979! Readers will love the variety of stories in this volume, which includes one of my favorite writers, Ron Rash!

Adam says

Great book.

Marjorie says

This book was like a delightful dementor - I read most of it certain I'd never feel cheerful again. Drugs and dead dogs and cockfights and guns and Mad Dog and Jim Beam. Incest and false gods and murder and unending violence. Glorious.

My favorites, though, were the George Singleton and Dale Ray Phillips stories, which were absurd and wry and brilliant and actually fun to read. I guess I wish this collection had a more even balance of wit with the grit.

Aaron S says

Eye opening collection of undervalued writers w/jaw dropping stories. If you don't find at least two or three new authors you're interested in, you need to stop living so closed minded. An excellent form of finding what could be your next 5 star story!

Beth says

This is an amazing compilation. Brian Carpenter's introductory essay was definitive and insightful, and the selections introduced me to several new authors even though I was already a huge grit lit fan.

Lawyer says

Grit Lit: A Rough South Reader, Tom Franklin's and Brian Carpenter's Slide into the Dark Side of Southern Life

Published by The University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, South Carolina, 2012

If you've wondered what Grit Lit is, Tom Franklin and Brian Carpenter have provided the answer with an outstanding anthology of short stories and excerpts from memoirs from some of the best known voices in contemporary Southern literature. The subtitle hints that the material contained between the cover of this book does not consist of moonlight and magnolias. There is nary a hoop skirt in sight. While there are many men contained in these pages that frankly don't give a damn, none of them is named Rhett Butler. Nor would an Ashley Wilkes have a snowball's chance in Hell of surviving a single work contained.

Franklin begins our journey with a brief explanation of grit lit. It's not that cereal that Southerners eat, though that's part of it. It's not the True Grit that Rooster Cogburn exhibited in taking on Ned Pepper and his gang, though that's part of it. Neither is it exclusively the grit that ends up grating against your feet within your steel toed work boots, though that is a large part of it.

Franklin writes:

"National Public Radio librarian Nancy Pearl says Grit Lit is 'filled with angry, deranged, and generally desperate characters who are fueled by alcohol and sex.' Yes, they drink. They smoke--weed and pills and sometimes meth. They're usually white, usually redneck, Snopesian, broke, divorced, violent--they're not good country people. Writer Tony Earley divides southern literature into two groups: those on the right side of the tracks, who sip mint juleps in Miss Welty's yard, sweating politely under the magnolias in seersucker suits; and those on the wrong side of the tracks, whose characters make shine, shoot or stab one another on occasion, and cruise around in their pickups tossing beer bottles along the side of the road while looking for armadillos to flatten.

Brian Carpenter's brilliant introduction takes us through the "history" of Grit Lit and the editorial process, the

difficulty he and Franklin had in finding the most pertinent examples that this volume proves they did their work and did it well. Carpenter tells us that clearly the Rough South was written about by William Faulkner and Erskine Caldwell. However, he and Franklin chose to present a more contemporary collection of voices in a rough choir that sing different verses of the same hymns.

The only obvious missing member of the choir is Cormac McCarthy, who has a policy of not allowing his works to be excerpted in anthologies. Fair enough, if that's the way Mr. McCarthy wants to play. I've read him. But I discovered tales from old friends and gems from undiscovered voices within the pages of this book.

A note on gender in Grit Lit. It is largely a fraternity. The sisterhood is rather small. The notable exceptions being Dorothy Allison and Lee Smith. Having seen the gleam in her eye at readings, I can see it when she said a Southern woman can cook you a cake and kill you, too.

You won't find a Tom Franklin story here. I suppose you don't include your own work when you're an editor, but it's a shame Carpenter didn't slip just one short one in when Franklin wasn't looking.

So, here's a brief rundown of who you'll find within these pages.

Harry Crews, *A Childhood: The Biography of a Place*. excerpt. Considered one of the finest Southern Memoirs ever written. Also included is an excerpt from his 1976 novel, *A Feast of Snakes*. Crews died in 2012.

Dorothy Allison, "Deciding to Live," the Preface to the first edition of *Trash*. Here are the plaintive echoes of Ruth Anne "Bone" Boatwright, from *Bastard Out of Carolina*.

Larry Brown, excerpt, *On Fire*. Brown was one of the most promising voices in contemporary Southern Literature, fiction or non-fiction. His voice was stilled by a heart attack in 2004.

Tim McLaurin, excerpt, from his memoir, *Keeper of the Moon: A Southern Boyhood*. McLaurin lost his battle with cancer in 2002. This excerpt focuses on a reluctant dogfighter, who would rather not put his dog in the pit. It is memorable. No. It is unforgettable.

Rick Bragg, one of my favorite storytellers resides in my home town, Tuscaloosa, Alabama. No anthology would be complete without excerpts from his memoirs, *Ava's Man*, and *All Over But the Shoutin'*.

To be continued...

Aspa says

I devoured this book in a few short days...the only thing missing was a little Cormac but he doesn't allow small excerpts of his stuff to be published so I can't fault the editors for that. If you have only explored the "hoop skirt" side of southern lit you are missing out!

Kay says

This is an excellent collection of stories and excerpts about the gritty South of those just scrapping by and sometimes not even that. Many stories I would rate at 5 stars although I gave this 4 stars because not all warranted the highest rating. First, the bad--the dry, scholarly introduction which was a total slog to get through. Some day I'll learn to read these last and just jump in and enjoy the stories. Once I started the stories, this book was great. The best of these for me: 1) Being introduced to the writer, Dorothy Allison. "River of Names" had one scene that once read, cannot be unread. 2) Being introduced to Hydro and his encounter with a pair of Bonnie and Clyde wannabes as shown in an excerpt of The Sharpshooter Blues by Lewis Nordan. There's an excerpt from Daniel Woodrell's Winters Bone--great book which I've read in the past. There were no bad stories although some were difficult to read, but that's sort of the point.

Cyndi says

Southern grittiness, less than savory characters and dull, listless psyches. Some excellent pieces, some that were a tad to heavy; but all fine in there own right.

Champaign Public Library says

Forget about sweet tea on the veranda--these folks are drinking bootleg liquor in their decaying trailers and pickups. Grit Lit collects short stories and excerpts from memoirs and novels by authors from the "Rough South" genre. I kept telling myself to stop reading these violent and sometimes depressing stories but the quality of writing was so outstanding that I kept reading "just one more". There is some humor to be found here but the collection is dominated by disturbing tales of dog-fighting and folks smacking each other with shovels. I did have to chuckle a little at how many of the authors' biographies included several years traveling around working odd jobs before getting their MFA in writing. If you enjoyed Daniel Woodrell's Winter's Bone or are a fan of Cormac McCarthy, Grit Lit will introduce you to a whole batch of similar writers--authors who know the rural poor and paint vivid portraits of the life they live.

Reviewed by Linda L.

Patty says

excellent collection

Brian Newman says

The collected stories are mostly great and a very good intro to the genre. The main editor is too in love with himself and the genre to know what's good for him. His intro is embarrassing to read so skip it and enjoy the stories.

