



Wrong

Dennis Cooper

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By daring to use death to look at life, Cooper gives us a new perspective on our deepest fears and needs. This collection of stories provides an overview of his evolution and, as William T. Vollmann wrote in The New York Times Book Review, a portrait of “our soulless and decaying society.”

Wrong Details

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Robert says

There are gorgeous passages of language in the stories collected in this 1992 volume, but the endless, repetitive litany of sexual abuse, rape, murder, and blank emotionlessness can leave me feeling as numbed out as one of Cooper's lost, drugged-out teenaged boys. "A Herd" & the title story are brilliant and chilling; the rest was hit or miss with me, and led me to wonder if Cooper ever found new territory to explore in fiction since his heyday as the grand old man of Gay Alternative/Transgressive Letters. He certainly does present a clear artistic vision, but a little of it goes a long way. ***1/2 out of *****

T4ncr3d1 says

"I shove the knot of my feelings as deep as they'll go into as compact and smooothed-out a prose style as I can build out of what I know. But they don't belong here, any more than a man's fist belongs in a boy's ass."

C'è solo uno scrittore capace di ammaliare e intossicare insieme, di stordirti e sconvolgerti, sì da suscitare repulsione e attrazione - questo scrittore non può che essere Dennis Cooper.

Wrong è una preziosa raccolta di racconti giovanili, scritti e pubblicati tra gli anni Ottanta e Novanta; in essi Cooper ridipinga il mondo che la sua adolescenza e giovinezza hanno conosciuto, mostrando un'America gay anni Settanta ben diversa da quella più iconica raccontata, per esempio, da un Edmund White. Da assassini ad adolescenti confusi, da crisi di coppia a colpi di fulmine, dalle perversioni più oscure al languor nostalgico con cui si chiude il libro: travolgente, trasfigurante e multiforme è lo spettro dei temi affrontati, delle sensazioni impresse come a fuoco sulla pelle del lettore. Dennis Cooper coglie ed esalta la vita laddove viene schiacciata, stuprata, devastata, mostrandone l'irriducibile cuore pulsante.

Torchee says

The extreme eroticism of this book disgusted and repulsed me. I am not a prude, I have read plenty of books with highly-sexualized scenes, but this just takes the fucking cake. Literature-wise I found nothing likeable about it. It does not teach the morals, values and ethics other people claim it evokes. Personally i find Cooper enjoying writing these kind of porno stuff. One star for the shock value coz I'm feeling merciful.

kim says

I find it exceedingly difficult to commit to reading collections of short stories. Most fail to build characterization and it's what compels me invest in the plot. With Dennis Cooper's work I enjoy how every act, no matter how degrading is the result of each characters personal anxieties and fears. Everything is psychological, rarely carnal if at all. One story I enjoyed in particular above all others is **Safe**. Definitely worth the read.

Alexander Veee says

"George thought of things that had haunted him during his life: A staircase that, after turning a corner, led to a brick wall. B&W photos of great buildings destined to be dusty heaps. A human face that had turned into just one more mudslide from heaven.

The hotel loomed in the distance. Its neon sign blinked out VACANCY. "An appropriate place for myself or what's left of me," George thought. He headed for its rococo, checking the faces of hapless pedestrians for his reflection. But they stared straight ahead, not realizing."

Liz says

I think Cooper's fiction works better in a longer novel form so you have more time to become involved with the characters. With his short stories it is almost an endless parade of the same man over and over again in each story (sad, lonely, horny, depraved, desperate, insatiable, violent, perverse, overstimulated) and they all seemed to blend together into one never-ending and interchangeable tale.

This is the third Cooper work I have read since the summer and I think I need to take a break as not to burn myself out.

Nate D says

As is typical for me, I'm more pulled in by longer-form storytelling, so the winding, desperate opener here, "The Herd", was the highlight. Even moreso than Cooper's first novel, *Safe*, a generous inclusion here that still felt a bit like three separate stories tied together in order to trace a common contour. Other highlights: timeless punk band story Horror Hospital, and the sequencing slight-of-hand that follows up the blunt detailing of a sex act in "Dinner" with a sort of narrative art criticism article on the aesthetics of pornography. Which really explains a lot of how Cooper works -- not the article itself, but this self-reflexive sequencing of idea that constantly reframes and studies its own tendencies. Actually, it's all pretty solid Cooper, just not quite as great as the entire Cycle that started just after *Safe* with *Closer*.

Kane S. says

This was a very frustrating book. I had mixed (though mostly positive) feelings about Dennis Cooper's other book, *The Sluts*. It seems to me a very strange metafictional text, and I would certainly suggest that people read it. But Dennis Cooper's earlier short fiction, collected here in *Wrong*, is so much of the same thing, I became very bored.

Listen, I understand that Cooper's thing is perverse sexuality and violence. But I find it hard not to roll my eyes by the seventh description of a gaping, just-fisted asshole. I just find Cooper so desperate to be cool. And I do not care about some writer's coolness.

The disappointing thing is that this book has some very clever passages, some genuinely thoughtful

moments, and some very interesting questions. But all of it is undone by Cooper's self-satisfaction. The fact that every story involves some twink being violently used by other men is so — honestly — dumb. Does he really believe that this is shocking?

I don't think I came away from this with much — not a thought, or an emotion, or even an image. Wrong is just so dull (and not in a meaningful way). Oh, well. On to the next one.

2 Assholes Like an Edvard Munch Painting out of 5

Robin Graber says

Not my fav. A few good stories but most were pretty “blah” for me.

Guy says

Bundel die verhalen verzamelt uit jaren tachtig en negentig. Hierdoor diverser dan 's mans George Miles-cyclus (Closer, Guide, Frisk, etc), met verhalen in zijn befaamde afstandelijke, nihilistische stijl, maar hier en daar ook wat sensationalistisch en zelf een als verhaal verkleed essayistisch gedrocht. De klassieke thema's (seksualiteit, dood, geweld, verveling, liefdeloosheid, apathie, pornografie) zijn allemaal aanwezig, al slaat de vonk zelden over. (**1/2)

Philippa Snow says

Wrong has moments of suprising beauty for a book so governed by ugly acts; of course, being Cooper, there's the usual fisting and torture shtick, but instances like the sad equivocation of the author's late boyfriend George Miles and a gay porn star ("*They're distinct. George is the beauty. Jeff's the statue erected of him in a public place so he'll remain aloft.*") in *Square One* offer something beyond the expected transgressions. The flip comparison of a character's stretched, post-coital anus and "*a character from an Edvard Munch painting*" in *Safe*, meanwhile, gave me one of the book's few uneasy laughs.

Imogen says

Y'know what was weird about this? Not that ol Dennis broke the fourth wall, exactly, but that like, he winked at me. In most of his other stuff that I've read, he's all straightfaced like 'then the dazed teenage drug addict spread his friends ass as far open as he could and stuffed his arm into it. To the elbow. Totally hot for the smell of blood and shit.' But in this one, he talks about "God" in quotes and alludes to having feelings! Weird. I know that I am a little bit obsessed with him so I can't really say but it makes me feel like he's letting me (I MEAN THE READER) closer (CLOSER) to him than usual. Which is nice.

Maybe it's just that the George Miles books are a very specific thing where he, as the author, totally hides out

and pretends not to be there? 'Cause these stories span thirty years or something so maybe he's been less impersonal when he's not writing the books that I liked so much. I mean, I'll said Ugly Man was funny, so I think probably.

Tristan Goding says

What started out as a morbidly curious read ended up taking me to the brink of complete despair and then dropping me off. After reading these stories for the first time, I cried for hours. There was something so deeply cruel and tragic about the whole affair. It wasn't any one story in particular, but the stories as a whole. I probably shouldn't have read them all in one sitting like I did, but that's the thing about Cooper's writing and his books. He uses words and phrases that drive the reader to compulsively read and to delve into the psyche of his alarmingly depraved mind until we are left feeling more than a little complacent in the carnage put forth on the page. Dennis Cooper's writings irk us because they are real. He writes the way many of us think but cannot not accept and may not even realize, then he provides us with a sliver of something that reminds us, too intimately, of ourselves and shakes us until we reach some level of understanding as to why these things that he depicts have to happen and why we must accept it. This book is madness in its most pure form, like all of Cooper's books are. He writes from the heart. His heart tells him that the rape, humiliation, and systematic desecration of a boy's body is what it's all about. We reject that notion, but keep reading anyway until we are forced to share the same headspace. Then we crawl away from the written word like wounded cattle.

Zweegas says

I've read 7 Dennis Cooper books in the past year (which probably has me on some kind of terrorism / subversive-group government watch-list). Dennis Cooper is an author with somewhat limited appeal. His books are unlike anything else I have ever read. You can't really know what a Dennis Cooper novel is like without actually reading it. There's lots of rape, torture, murder, child molestation, drugs, mutilation, necrophilia, and other transgressive activities in just about each one. There are definitely passages that could use a lot of revision, but there are passages of pure brilliance in his work.

Wrong is the only collection of short stories by Dennis Cooper that I've read. Several of the stories are about serial killers -- "A Herd", "Wrong". "Introducing Horror Hospital" is a cute love story with an unhappy ending. It's about the difference between real pain and professional / postured pain. "Dinner" is a short, exquisite piece that's all about getting fisted. These are subjects I want to read about in my fiction. These are topics I actually care about. I identify with the characters in "Square One" and that is DISTURBING.

Tosh says

Dennis Cooper is one of the most underrated American authors. He has a vision and skill to go to places that most people wouldn't want to go there. He's a great explorer and I don't mind him driving me to those dark locations.

