



The Collected Stories of Joseph Roth

Joseph Roth, Michael Hofmann (Translator)

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Appearing in English for the first time, *The Collected Stories of Joseph Roth* includes seventeen novellas and stories that echo the intensity and achievement of his greatest novel, *The Radetzky March*. Spanning the entire range of Roth's brief life (1894-1939) and showcasing the breadth of his literary powers, this collection features many stories just recently discovered. Roth's novellas and short stories will rank with Chekhov's as among the greatest of modern literature.

The Collected Stories of Joseph Roth Details

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From Reader Review The Collected Stories of Joseph Roth for online ebook

Mark says

I read only the story "Stationmaster Fallmerayer, which the translator called out as the finest. It's certainly an interesting story, well told and full of detail, but I found it to be utterly passionless. I find Stephan Zweig, Roth's contemporary, to be much moree penetrating, and his characters to be morre lively. Roth's characters are deadened, or at least his expression is, and I wonder to what extent that reflects his alcoholism. Or maybe it's depression, or perhaps both. Either way, if Stationmaster is his masterpiece, I have no need to read further.

Francesca says

Why did it take me so long to discover this guy?!!! BRILLIANT!

Kenneth says

I registered a book at BookCrossing.com!
<http://www.BookCrossing.com/journal/13130252>

Kenneth Duckworth says

My mother purchased this book for me along with Roth's masterwork, the Radetzky March, after I read a review of his work in the New Yorker. My great-grandparents all immigrated to America from Austrian Galicia. They were Poles, living among Jews, Ukrainians and whatever nationalities that populated the borderlands of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. I have long been a student of the history and politics of this region, and had the good ortune to visit one of my ancestral villages when I was posted to the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine. Of course, there are no longer Jews nor even Poles in these villages anymore, and their cultural monuments are decrepit and crumbling. But reading these stories brought that part of Europe - as it was before the war - vividly to life, and I felt I was seeing the world as my great-grandfather my have seen it.

Cooper Renner says

really 3.5 stars, I think. The novel is Roth's great strength, and some of those strengths are on evidence here, but there is inevitably some unevenness in an assemblage of writing created over 20+ years. The real charmer, for me, is "April", funny, sweet, well-done. Fine fine work. In some of the stories there is a sense of humor and the absurd which recalls Kafka, who had begun to publish about the time Roth began writing.

Steve Kettmann says

My review published in the San Francisco Chronicle in 2002:

The Collected Stories

of Joseph Roth

By Joseph Roth;

translated by

W.W. NORTON & COMPANY; 281 PAGES; \$27.95

It might not be immediately clear to some readers whether Austrian novelist Joseph Roth, author of the acclaimed "The Radetzky March," really deserves this clear-the-archives collection of nearly all his short fiction, gathered in English for the first time. The man died in Paris way back in 1939, after all, and has never been included among the greats of 20th century European literature.

But for anyone with a passion for great writing, it's well worth sorting through the uneven offerings presented here for a glimpse of a tremendous talent finding itself -- and also of a long-gone world of Jewish villages late in the Hapsburg Empire. Born in 1894 in Galicia (now western Ukraine), Roth served in World War I, studied in Vienna and made his name as a newspaper journalist for Germany's *Frankfurter Zeitung*.

What is amazing about Roth's short stories, though, is not their place in history, but his sense of fun and love of his characters. It takes love to craft someone as thoroughly awful as the thin-lipped, book-devouring, empty soul at the center of "The Honors Student," or as pathetic as the woman in "Barbara," whose dreary life of sacrifice for her only son ends up meaning nothing to the practical-minded son himself.

Roth writes with the powerfully descriptive vividness of Babel, as when he describes the "slim white hands" of a train-wreck survivor lying still, atop her mink coat, like "two beautiful corpses." But he also loves to hop from one good-naturedly absurd idea to another, pursuing a light satire that brings to mind Garcia Marquez or Heller. "Describe the sea to me!" a coral dealer demands in "The Leviathan."

" 'It's full of water,' said the sailor Komrower.' " Badda-badda-bing, we can almost hear. But as always, Roth uses his light touch to bring alive the inner longing of this coral dealer, one of many Roth characters who yearn to break out of the confines of their lives. Those longings are part of a human landscape that is anything but dated or dusty, but often haunting and always lively and moving.

Read more: <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article...>

Erik says

2.5 stars

Some of these clearly should never have been published.

Mshelton50 says

I love Joseph Roth. He was a wonderful storyteller. His novel Radetzky March is one of my top five. The stories in this collection are a bit of a hodge-podge. "Stationmaster Fallmerayer" and "The Bust of the Emperor" are brilliant. The Galician stories, "Strawberries" and "This morning, a letter arrived . . ." are also terrific. Some of the others are not as accomplished. But this translation by Michael Hofmann is a wonderful addition to your Roth library. And again, Roth's prose is marvelous, which is not surprising given he was the premier journalist of Weimar Germany.

James says

I don't normally read short stories, but I was reading all the Roth I found in the Athenaeum. I like the Austro-Hungarian time period and was interested in his look back as he wrote many of these after the Empire collapsed after World War I.

Carolin Kopplin says

Read the book in German. Excellent storytelling, beautiful descriptive language, nailing the characters.

Rick says

The stories and Novellen in this collection are a bit more accessible than HOTEL SAVOY, although many of them still deal with the fall of the Habsburg empire. Particularly fine are "Stationmaster Fallmerayer" and "The Bust of the Emperor."

Navida says

These were lovely and sad.

Russell Bittner says

To say that I was bewildered by the time I'd finished the first eight stories in this collection by Joseph Roth is putting it mildly. While I didn't exactly question whether the man could actually write clear and cogent prose, I began to think the translator, Michael Hofmann, had done him a disservice — not in his translation, but in exposing these pieces to an English-speaking public. I wondered: might they have something Kafkaesque in the original German that was simply untranslatable?

By way of example, I give you this snippet (on p. 86) from his story “April”:

“My friend Abel yearned for New York.

“Abel was a painter and caricaturist. Even before he could hold a pencil, he was already a caricaturist. He had a low opinion of beauty and he loved crippledom and distortion. He couldn’t draw a straight line.

“Abel had a low opinion of women. What men love in a woman is the perfection they think they see in her. Abel, though, had no use for perfection.

“He himself was ugly, so that women fell in love with him. Women suppose that male ugliness hides perfection or greatness.

“Once, he was able to travel to New York. On the boat he saw, for the first time in his life, a beautiful woman.

“When he reached port, the beautiful woman vanished from his sight. He took the next ship back to Europe.”

I read on, however — and am glad I did. When I entered his first novella-length story (even if not listed as a novella) in this collection, “The Blind Mirror,” I was pleasantly surprised to see that my initial misgivings were simply too hastily formed. Roth needed time and space to work out a story, and the following paragraph on p. 109 is a fair demonstration of his solid authorial skills:

“Night is full of feeling and surprise: out of the blue, longings come to us, when the distant whistle of a locomotive catches in the window, when a cat slinks along the pavement opposite hungry for love, and disappears into a basement window where the tom waits. There is a big starry sky above us, too remote to be kind, too beautiful not to harbor a God. There are the little things close at hand and there is a remote eternity, and some relation between them that escapes our understanding. Maybe we would understand it, if love were to visit us; love relates the stars and the slinking cat, the lonesome whistle and the vastness of the heavens.”

How this novella eventually plays out is, of course, another story — but whether well, badly or indifferently is for you, a potential reader, to decide, and not for me to say.

“Stationmaster Fallmerayer” (also not listed as a novella, even if of novella-length) is, alone, worth the ‘price’ of reading Roth’s entire opus.

The final three pieces in the collection, all of which are listed as novellas, demonstrate Roth’s immense skill as a story-teller and sometimes stylist. “The Triumph of Beauty” is as good a depiction of ‘the age of hysteria’ as any you’re ever likely to read. “The Bust of the Emperor” is an excellent — if somewhat sentimental — portrait of the passing of an era (following WWI and the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire). And the final contribution, “The Leviathan,” is about the slow corruption and quick end — sometimes clumsy and off-kilter in the telling — of a simple man in the early days of the Soviet Union. It shares with Roth’s other stories the prevailing theme of an old world order collapsing and succumbing to a new.

Take heart (and a stiff drink) before sitting down with *The Collected Stories of Joseph Roth*. They're not everyman's cup of tea — not by a long shot — but I dare say your time and keen attention will be amply rewarded.

RRB

09/03/14

Brooklyn, NY
