



Woodcuts of Women

Dagoberto Gilb

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Dagoberto Gilb is an acknowledged master of the short story, the winner of the PEN/Hemingway Award, and a PEN/Faulkner finalist for his debut collection, *The Magic of Blood*, and was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for his fiction writing. His critically acclaimed collection *Woodcuts of Women* is now available in paperback and features ten moving and heartbreaking stories of lust, love, and longing among men and women struggling to find their way in the world. Written in Gilb's spare, humid language, each of these haunting stories is crafted with a poetic, aching beauty. At turns powerful and resonant, hopeful and humorous, *Woodcuts of Women* is a tour de force by one of America's foremost Latino writers. "The sheer intensity and bravado of [Gilb's] vision make this collection succeed." -- Jean Thompson, *The New York Times Book Review* "Lonely, tough stories -- stories that force us to confront what's difficult in us, and in the people we love." -- Adrienne Miller, *Esquire* "Gilb's stories read like verbal woodcuts deliberately unrefined and carefully unadorned, clear in their intent but without undue elaboration...." -- Sean Glennon, *The Hartford Courant* ..Gilb writes of the gritty passions of man for women, grand delusions and tender mercies...." -- Oscar C. Villalon, *San Francisco Chronicle*

Woodcuts of Women Details

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From Reader Review Woodcuts of Women for online ebook

Bill Littell says

This book of short stories, perhaps, sets out to accomplish something that it never quite realizes. Gilb is a poetic and skilled writer, but besides "A Painting in Santa Fe," I wouldn't recommend this collection.

Sarah says

I wanted to like this book. I heard Dagoberto Gilb introduce Sandra Cisneros (one of my favorite authors) at an event in Austin last year. I think that I'm just very particular about short stories, and his writing didn't make sense to me sometimes.

I did really like the woodcut illustrations though. They were beautiful!

Guillermo says

I'm simply left in awe with his prose, the way he thinks - the construction of his words. Dagoberto Gilb is the working man's writer, being a working man himself. His words become thoughts, become sentences, become paragraphs, eventually leading to the skyscraper of human nature reaching towards the heavens, connecting us with gods of old.

(continue reading)

Julia says

Wow - I didn't know that the author, Dagoberto Gilb, had won a ton of literary awards. I came across this book when I was researching how to make woodcuts/linocuts. I ordered it mainly because it had a woodcut on the cover - ha! - and because I loooooove short stories.

Some of the stories were fantastic, while others were good but not great. Just hearing about all his awards makes me want to research his other books.

Josh says

This is one of those story collections I tend to re-evaluate the minute I'm done reading. Maybe it's because "Snow," the final story, is so incredible; and maybe it's because I went through the others so quickly. Gilb uses language like a hammer; he forces you to forget that language is precious and then, in his own way, reminds you again. There are many incredible passages laced throughout these ten stories. Gilb is a master of pacing and dialogue; his characters are all very real. He's often compared to Carver, but there's a little more

hope here; in Gilb's voice, even the dire sounds determined and full of life. I won't give the book five stars because I think that many of the endings fall flat. I rarely liked whole stories, more just pieces of all of them. "A Painting in Santa Fe," "Shout," "About Tere Who was in Palomas," and "Brisa" were among my favorites. But "Snow" takes the cake. Gilb is a poet who sometimes tells stories and most of me, as a writer and as a reader, is okay with that.

Emily says

I haven't read the last two stories yet, so this review isn't fair. But then again, I can't rate this book fairly at all, because Gilb was my teacher and I'm super fond of him as a person, so I'm prejudiced.

This is a collection best read slowly, since almost all of the stories are first person narrators and some of them have similar themes. My favorite one in here so far is "Pillows," which is about (spoiler) a guy who is house-sitting and notices that all the pillows in the apartment are filthy. The narrator can't stop thinking about all those filthy pillows. Actually, there are a lot of narrators in *Woodcuts of Women* who are fixated on thoughts that initially seem small but end up being moving. I like that about this book.

Steph says

I got about half way through this collection of short stories and couldn't finish it. Plenty of folks have written about their sexual rites of passage, but there was something particularly creepy about this guy's narrative - a man who will use one woman while he pines for, loves, or is infatuated with another.

Writing style aside, the tales of this work didn't necessarily prompt my desire to finish past the 50% mark.

Maybe I'll go back to it in the future, but for now, life is too short to read mediocre writing and creepy sad plots.

Evanston Public Library says

In every chapter, there's a man looking for love sometimes in all the wrong places—a gay night club, a friend's dirty unkempt apartment, Hollywood Boulevard. Sometimes love finds him like at a motel pool. In Dagoberto Gilb's *WOODCUTS OF WOMEN*, sexual attractions are explored freely and heated love conquered. Intimacies are displayed artfully in these ten stories of passionate working men and the women they love with the same sensitivities and physical yearning as their women. Featuring artwork by Artemio Rodriguez. (Elvira, C-D)

Crease says

Dagoberto Gilb is possessed of incredible powers of description. But in a unique way, wholly different and

categorically unique; not with words perfectly placed, like Coetzee; not with the winds of magical realism at his back, like Garcia Marquez; not hip like Junot Diaz. But special. And simple. In this quick read, I found myself going back and re-reading the last paragraph or two half a dozen times, asking "How'd he do that? How did I arrive here?"

Dago has a special relationship with lust as well. And love. And the journey between the two.

Similar to Ana Castillo's "Peel My Love like an Onion", it delivers the cultural goods. Con orgullo chicano, orgullo mexicano. The characters exhibit a vulnerability that lets you in, has you straight up salty when the story ends. Out of ten stories, only one disappoints. Also, don't bypass the artwork of Mexican Artemio Rodriguez that precedes each new story. Goes perfectly with the stories...like squeezing lime on tacos pastor.

Gracias a la bellísima que consiguió lejos para este libro...

Kallie says

Gilb's style is spare and direct, immediate. He takes us right next to his characters' skin rather than inside their minds. This has a sensually enchanting affect, in environs that vary from bowery to suburban paradise. His irony permeates, but never takes over or sours the simple beauty he evokes describing his characters observations of others, their inner perceptions, their world. I think we could accurately call this 'Chicano irony' -- that of the outsider who knows from the inside.

Connect-ion Found says

Woodcuts of Women by Dagoberto Gilb reminds us of the first time we read anything erotic or groundbreaking yielding such an addiction to the page that removing your eyes and mind from the book is as tough as kicking a habit. Woodcuts...begs the attention of men and women, couples, book clubs and gender study courses to read, discuss and peel back the several layers of what a man's love of women is -as well as to examine the possible objectification that feminists warn against. The jury is still out on whether this book is guilty of anything short of well-examined themes, intelligent entertainment and a Latino artist's perspective on the passionate force that binds Latino couples.

As we open the cover, before we see the title page and certainly before the table of contents or first word, we see a woodcut image of a naked woman with large breasts, a Latina's hips, crossed arms and a thoughtful expression. The image is tasteful and carries opposite the page a dressed woman with crossed arms, in her home and surprisingly the object of a serpent-devil's desire. The naked woman is observing, she is exposed and somehow carries an edenesque confidence that may cool even the most ardent feminist's protest, it tells of the very mystery that drives desire.

"I like women. No, wait. I love women. I know that don't sound like anything new, nothing every guy wouldn't tell you...I don't ask anybody out. I already have a girlfriend...Still, its like I feel drunk around them. Like they make me so pedo..." The first time I was exposed to this book my nievety accused it of being crude, a voice I knew too well from growing up in Little Village, Chicago but as my experience with global texts increased I knew the voice and love that Gilb writes uniquely represents feelings that consistently go unnoticed and are traditionally undervalued. "She was kissing. She was babies." Gilb knows love.

Born in Los Angeles, Gilb's work has been translated into French, Italian, Japanese, German, Spanish, and Dutch. He's received national prizes, such as the Whiting Writers' Award, the Guggenheim Fellowship, and

recognized through the El Paso Writer's Hall of Fame. Woodcuts of Women was published in 2001.

Katie M. says

Meh. We all know how I feel about short stories. And as much as I can appreciate an appreciation of women, these were just too testosterone-fueled for me. Nice writing, but I probably won't move on to his novels.

Cate Molina says

i so loved this collection of stories! it is because of this book that made me go to dagoberto gilb's recent reading at sacramento city college to hear him read from the even more magnificent "the flowers". these are stories about women by a man who really knows women. in a good way too, smart and sexually. the man should be a ton more well known than i think he is. if not for these two books alone, but as a speaker: he is so funny, such a fantastic reader, and everyone loved his talk. really impressive. my biggest regret is that i forgot to bring my copy of woodcuts of women for him to sign.

Jessie says

Eh, the writing is good, but these stories just weren't my cup of tea. I did enjoy "A Painting in Santa Fe."

Josephine Ensign says

Dripping with testosterone and unevenly written. I don't consider myself a prude, but many of the stories in this collection read more like soft porn. "Bottoms" (although, yes, by its title it could also be porn) was excellent and made reading the collection worthwhile. After a stint of reading both Gilb and Richard Ford, I feel thoroughly exposed to manly-man sensibilities--so now I am re-reading Moby Dick...
