



Water Street

Crystal Wilkinson

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On Water Street, every person has at least two stories to tell. One story that the light of day shines on and the other that lives only in the pitch black of night, the kind of story that a person carries beneath their breastbones for safekeeping. WATER STREET examines the secret lives of neighbours and friends who live on Water Street in a small town in Kentucky. Assured and intimate, dealing with love, loss, truth and tragedy, Wilkinson weaves us in and out of the lives of Water Street's inhabitants.

Water Street Details

Date : Published February 15th 2005 by Toby Press (first published August 2002)

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Author : Crystal Wilkinson

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From Reader Review Water Street for online ebook

Wanda says

I really love this author, and this book did not disappoint. However, I didn't like it as much as Blackberries, Blackberries. I didn't like how some of the stories just ended, and I felt like not enough was given for it to end the way it did. I like the idea of stories from different homes on the same street, and I enjoy how intertwined the character's lives were. Crystal has the ability transport me into someone else's life, even if just for a little while and that is the quality I love most about her writing. It's very realistic.

Bonnie says

I usually get bogged down reading a book of short stories , I'll get to a story that makes no sense and ends up in the air and I'm done. Well, not this book, all the stories are wonderful or amazing or shocking. Loved it. I also heard her read at Pitt Bradford the other day and bought her new book, Birds of Opulence which I can't wait to get into. Hope she keeps them coming.

Aj says

Vibrant stories. I am not always a fan of books with a shattered narrative structure, but this one succeeds at every turn. Wilkinson does a fantastic job of portraying the lives on a particular street in a small town. Each new character feels complete, unique, and engaging. There is not a chapter that falls flat or feels out of place--which is quite a feat! This book went quick for me. Very enjoyable read.

Michael Fischer says

Real deal beautiful stuff. These linked stories will sneak up on you, "quiet" and gem-polished on the surface, but always ready to kick you in the gut with an odd, original twist or moment (always organic and honest--never "tricky"). Wilkinson's use of narration is also superb, as many of the stories break the tired workshop maxim, "show, don't tell," by "telling" the rich emotional lives of characters (similar to Anderson in "Winesburg, Ohio," so the comparison made between the two in one of the blurbs makes sense). Time is also handled amazingly in these stories, as Wilkinson is often able to capture an entire lifetime in just eight-ten pages.

If you like fiction that grabs you by the throat and refuses to let go, then you'll love "Water Street."

MsChris says

An affrilachia set of short stories that are all centered around one small community on Water Street. I don't usually like this style of stories but think Wilkinson executed this well. Each chapter really could stand alone on its own, but is only improved by being in a collection as they all intertwine.

Amanda says

I was not a fan of this novel. I can appreciate each short story individually and as it functions as a single narrative. I think my problem stems from a lack of cohesion. Yes, the novel takes place on Water Street. Yes, the characters are mostly connected to each other. Yes, each character has a known story and a hidden story. Yes, the many questions we (as readers) are left with are realistic; after all, we never get all the answers in life, so it makes sense to have these stories with open-ended questions. However, at no point do they truly converge. I wanted a reason for all of these characters and their stories. It seems that the only connection is location, and that unfortunately leaves the book feeling lacking by the end.

Erin says

Interesting enough, but not really what I thought it was. I guess that is why I didn't really like it. I found some of the stories interesting, but was frustrated when there wasn't any follow up or continuity through the story.

Didi says

If you've followed me on here for a while you know there are two things I'm not so keen on reading. The first one is series and the second one is short story collections. Now it seems as if I'm turning over a new leaf with the later. Water Street by Crystal Wilkinson is my third attempt at reading them and they seem to be getting better and better. I dare say I've been lucky or I just know how to choose a good book. Whatever it is Water Street is a short Water Street story collection you must check out.

The overall themes are about everyday feelings and problems – race, love and family relationships, mental health, getting older, coming of age, among many others. The characters in the book range from all different types and you'll want to hear their story during the day and their inner secrets.... Click the link for the rest <http://browngirlreading.com/2015/04/2...>

Gaynell says

I really liked the book. I felt like I knew the people who lived on Water Street by the time I finished the book.

Mocha Girl says

Crystal Wilkinson's Water Street is an engaging novel that transports the reader to a middle-class neighborhood in small town Stanford, Kentucky, USA. The residents are hardworking, law-abiding citizens who go to work, church, pay their taxes, and raise their families to the best of their abilities. In the opening passages of the book, the author mentions that every person has two stories to tell: one story by day and the other by night which is kept near the heart for safekeeping. Wilkinson allows the reader to experience both stories through the carefully crafted monologues and short narratives. The novel opens with the manic-depressant Yolanda in the midst of a meeting with her psychiatrist. In her session, the reader is casually introduced to a few Water Street residents: her best friend, Mona whom she idolizes; her brother, KiKi, her husband, Junior; and a host of other characters who influenced her in childhood and adulthood. The beauty of the novel is the reader will learn more about Mona, Kiki, Junior, Sandy, Maxine, et al in subsequent chapters via a series of soliloquies or third person accounts. Through the selected medium, the reader observes how they tackle a host of issues such as interracial relationships, marital problems, quests for love, divorce, absentee parents, etc.

Because it is a small town and all the residents live on Water Street, the stories are interconnected and the same characters are often mentioned in one or more stories. So for example, we hear about Mona, the best friend from Yolanda; Mona, my little sister's best friend that I slept with from Kiki; Mona in her own eyes, etc. We get up close and personal viewpoints from mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, daughters, sons, neighbors and friends. One particular noteworthy item is that the author's skill in writing from the male perspective is equally compelling as from the female's. In "The Girl of My Dreams: Kiki", we find Kevin/Kiki calling off the wedding after the rehearsal dinner, but not for the reasons one may think because of the title of the story. We also experience other male viewpoints in the coming of age stories "Water Street, 1979: Junior", "Between Men", and a principled man in search of love in "An Ordinary Man: Reverend Townsend."

The dialogue is mature, the writing is great, and the stories are painfully honest. These are not eccentric or malevolent characters, in fact, they are so down-to-earth that they seem real, almost like ordinary folk instead of fictional protagonists. Just as with non-fictional beings, the harsh realities of life strikes Water Street as with any other street and the imperfections, vulnerabilities, pain, and joy of the characters are expertly revealed. Water Street's messages are universal and timeless: the same people with the same issues can be found in the inner cities as well as the rural landscapes in any decade. This is a great second novel by Crystal Wilkinson; I must add her debut novel, Blackberries, Blackberries to my list of books to check out this year.

T.L. Cooper says

Water Street, Wilkinson's follow-up to Blackberries, Blackberries, once again sets the reader right in the middle of Kentucky culture. Focusing her short stories on fictional inhabitants of Water Street creates a novel-like feel in the character studies exploring the interconnectedness of the characters of Water Street. Wilkinson's stories examine human experience without being preachy. Wilkinson again demonstrates the challenges and joys of the human experience through her exquisite use of vernacular, description, setting and character.

John Bunyan says

Crystal was the teacher in a writing seminar I took, so I come at this with some bias. I probably would not have selected this book if not for that connection. But I'm glad I did. Crystal's writing is a pleasure and she crafts the characters so well. She makes each one unique and evokes their inner secrets and emotions. The stories here are intertwined and I kept thinking I should go back and chart out the characters and connections. Each story does stand alone though and each is engaging and revealing of a larger truth behind the individual's experience. The only negative comment I have is that I wanted the last story to somehow fit with the first to bring it full circle or tie it together. But the last story seemed the most disconnected. It doesn't diminish the stories, just left me slightly unsatisfied. I'd love to see a full novel from Crystal

Jay says

I had read excerpts of Wilkinson's work in a Kentucky and Appalachian Writers course. She visited our class and told us some stories from her personal life, gave us some insight into her writing, and gave us a short private reading, and she also did a public reading and signing at the local bookstore, which I also attended. I chose to read Water Street before *Blackberries, Blackberries* mostly because I had read the short piece "In Plain Sight" from this text and had absolutely fallen in love with it, and wished to read the rest of the stories from the infamous Water Street.

Wilkinson does not disappoint. The front cover of the edition I read had a quote about her being comparable to other Southern writers such as Eudora Welty, and I must agree. This text was raw but elegant, something that I imagine is difficult to achieve. It displays the ins-and-outs of Appalachian life, the societal norms and customs, while also showing the struggle of the individual to be their own person, to act as they wish and feel fit, and deal with their own internal conflicts as well as the external as a result. The characters are dynamic and remarkably plausible. The situations and chain of events are perfectly planned and executed to create an incredible work of art and culture that should be read and cherished by all.

Christina says

This was an amazing collection of short stories. Most of the stories will stick with me for a long time. I've read "Birds of Opulence" prior to reading this, and many of the characters in that book are featured in this as well. Some of the stories in "Water Street" mentioned in "Birds of Opulence" as well, but we hear how it impacts the characters at different points in their life. Overall, this was a great book, and I will mostly re-read this again sometime this year.

Megan says

A linked collection of short stories set in a small Kentucky town. The format works so very well here; brief mentions of characters in one story gain deeper meanings once those characters have their turn in the spotlight, and by the end, the entire project thrums with a level of subtle emotional intensity that'd've been hard to develop and maintain in a novel.

Wilkinson writes with unshowy ease and empathy about the intimate, small-time dramas that shape people's lives, and while these stories often feel more like inconclusive vignettes at time, they're all very compelling and add up to something more than the sum of their parts. I'm really eager to read Wilkinson's other collection and her novel now.
