



Dining on Stones

Iain Sinclair

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Dining on Stones is Iain Sinclair's sharp, edgy mystery of London and its environs.

Andrew Norton, poet, visionary and hack, is handed a mysterious package that sees him quit London and head out along the A13 on an as yet undefined quest. Holing up in a roadside hotel, unable to make sense of his search, he is haunted by ghosts: of the dead and the not-so dead; demanding wives and ex-wives; East End gangsters; even competing versions of himself. Shifting from Hackney to Hastings and all places in-between, while dissecting a man's fractured psyche piece by piece, *Dining on Stones* is a puzzle and a quest - for both writer and reader.

'Exhilarating, wonderfully funny, greatly unsettling - Sinclair on top form' *Daily Telegraph*

'Prose of almost incantatory power, cut with Chanderlesque pithiness' *Sunday Times*

'Spectacular: the work of a man with the power to see things as they are, and magnify that vision with a clarity that is at once hallucinatory and forensic' *Independent on Sunday*

Iain Sinclair is the author of *Downriver* (winner of the James Tait Black Memorial Prize and the Encore Award); *Londor's Tower*; *White Chappell*, *Scarlet Tracings*; *Lights Out for the Territory*; *Lud Heat*; *Rodinsky's Room* (with Rachel Lichtenstein); *Radon Daughters*; *London Orbital*, *Dining on Stones*, *Hackney*, *that Rose-Red Empire* and *Ghost Milk*. He is also the editor of *London: City of Disappearances*.

Dining on Stones Details

Date : Published April 28th 2005 by Penguin (first published April 29th 2004)

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From Reader Review Dining on Stones for online ebook

Gareth White says

Sinclair's novel is the perfect epitome of a non-novel. The psychogeographer is a dab hand at depicting the ruined landscapes which surround the outer zones of London, lands which are populated by equally ruined and morally ambiguous characters. The plot, however, is incredibly difficult to follow. The reader is presented with several uncertainties that you would probably need a few flowcharts to understand what is happening. We are also presented with multiple protagonists, schizophrenic narrators, and the unnerving thought of "Has this actually happened?". Sinclair draws heavily on literary theory to pad out his works which, whilst being interesting, dilutes the narrative possibility of the work (works?) itself.

Some parts will charm you. Other parts will frustrate. Extremely frustrate.

Sashinka says

I didn't enjoy this. It rambled along without a clear plot, without full character development and with only place as it's holding point. Which I didn't enjoy as it kept jumping from one part of the east end to the other within a paragraph. The East End isn't so small that you can get from Aldgate to Barking in 5 minutes. Not even on the tube, but certainly not on foot. Not something I'd recommend to others.

Duane Sobczak says

I guess this guy isn't my cup of tea. Pretty simple review actually. This book was a terrible disjointed mess.

Kenneth says

I registered a book at BookCrossing.com!
<http://www.BookCrossing.com/journal/13973483>

Amerynth says

God awful.... that's my thought on Iain Sinclair's novel "Dining on Stones." It is absolutely everything I hate in contemporary fiction.

Written in lots of choppy sentences, the book attempts to be clever but fails. I can't even tell you what the story was about.... about halfway through, I read the blurb on the back cover and said, "Wait, what?" because I don't remember any of that happening. I don't remember anything happening except the narrator wandering around talking about a book he wrote or didn't write or was about to write.

I have no idea what makes this a candidate for 1,001 Books to Read Before you Die. I suspect the person who nominated it is friends with the author. Absolute drivel... I gave this one up about halfway through.

Sharlene says

I'm not entirely sure what to make of it. It was interesting and the writing was pretty brilliant, but I just couldn't sustain the interest. And left it 1/3 in.

Dave says

A struggle to get through from start to finish, as if the author intentionally made it indigestible to match the possible pun in the title.

laut says

I mostly found myself skimming this book, rather than really paying proper attention to it. It definitely seemed like yet another book on the 1001 list where the author was more interested in being clever than crafting an actually readable book.

Not my thing at all..

Deanne says

When I started reading the book I recognised the building Sinclair talks about. I used to live in Hastings and walked past the apartment block which from the sea looks like a cruise liner. However after this I rapidly grew bored, didn't really like any of the characters and was relieved when I read the last page. Fortunately it was from the library so I could give it back.

Kate S says

This was a strange journey. But I found myself enjoying it and regretting having to put it down. Definitely more style than substance, but engaging nonetheless. I wish I knew more about the physical space London occupies (and some of the history regarding this), but the ideas were understood regardless.

Jonathan says

It is forever associated for me with sharing a train compartment with three strangers, on the way to Stockholm from Ostersund. I guess the book was okay.

Yassemin says

Eugh....the first couple of pages were enough to put me off...

Jonfaith says

While there may not be monsters, there is no plot here--which in itself isn't bad, but what remains is turbulent and opaque, a bundling of doubles and their unedited transcription. All this links across spouses and walks along the A13 to the coast. Kubrick and Conrad reappear as leitmotifs. But not the rain.

Sinclair isn't for everyone. Staccato references, few verbs.

Roads are traversed and often repeated via different protagonists--who may be the same person or a literary construction. Interspersed are found manuscripts.

Sediment prevails. As does rust.
And rot.

Roisin says

This book contains familiar themes involving a journey to the coast, which a writer takes in search of a package in the ownership of a woman, where music, the criminal underworld, dangerous places and hidden gems merge. Is the book that he trying to locate his writing or someone else's? You may join his journey, but might feel a bit disappointed. This book had some interesting journeys and places that may resonate, but not enough to keep the reader hooked in parts. He has written better books. Best to start with something else by him, 'Lights Out For Territory' instead.

David Hallard says

Sinclair moved house, or to be more precise, purchased a second dwelling on the coast; this is the product, in words, of the consequences. Reading like a clash of civilizations, two London-eye scale groupsets of eccentric cogs meet head-on, sometimes meshing, sometimes not. The reader, the derailleur in this mad marriage, prances nimbly to apprehend the leads into familiar Sinclair territory, aligning and formatting amid the deluge of data.

The Conradian companion to the text, Nostromo, is a departure from the grand project iron lung, Heart of Darkness, and thus also marks a colossal shift. The hunt for the madman in the bush gives ground to a whodunit over grand theft, refracted of course through numerous narrative frames.

But it is the assumption that sits with the decampment to the coast (the amniotic return), of retirement, that haunts this text. Leaking autobiographical titbits (photographs even), there is a sense that the game may be

up (or at least not be too far away) and the most eminent Professor (unofficial) of London's postmodern sublime may finally be ready to declare his hand.
