



Raise High
the Roof Beam,
Carpenters

and

Seymour
an Introduction

J. D. Salinger

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The author writes: The two long pieces in this book originally came out in The New Yorker ? RAISE HIGH THE ROOF BEAM, CARPENTERS in 1955, SEYMOUR ? An Introduction in 1959. Whatever their differences in mood or effect, they are both very much concerned with Seymour Glass, who is the main character in my still-uncompleted series about the Glass family. It struck me that they had better be collected together, if not deliberately paired off, in something of a hurry, if I mean them to avoid unduly or undesirably close contact with new material in the series. There is only my word for it, granted, but I have several new Glass stories coming along ? waxing, dilating ? each in its own way, but I suspect the less said about them, in mixed company, the better. Oddly, the joys and satisfactions of working on the Glass family peculiarly increase and deepen for me with the years. I can't say why, though. Not, at least, outside the casino proper of my fiction.

Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters & Seymour: An Introduction Details

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From Reader Review Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters & Seymour: An Introduction for online ebook

lorinbocol says

alzate l'architrave, carpentieri. lo sposo, simile ad ares sopraggiunge, il più alto fra tutti gli uomini.

la differenza col 111mo frammento di saffo, è che qui lo sposo non arriva. seymour - fratello dell'alter ego di salinger, lo scrittore buddy glass - molla la sposa all'altare, salvo fuggire poche ore dopo con lei, schivando cerimonia e festeggiamenti. è lui, geniale e *scentrato* fratello maggiore, il protagonista dei due lunghi racconti di questo volume. lui insieme a una pletora di personaggi indimenticabili (aspettavo da una vita di abbinare banalmente queste due parole) che sono le comparse attraverso cui JDS traccia la sinopia ironica della società americana del secondo dopoguerra. ed è anche per questo che *alzate l'architrave* eccetera è il modo per leggere un ottimo salinger quando la carta di identità impone di uscire dalla sfera di influenza del giovane holden.

perché il più celebre portatore di disturbo post traumatico da stress della letteratura americana in questo libro sistema non solo l'architrave dei racconti, ma anche i pilastri, gli stipiti e ogni elemento verticale necessario a reggerli. e quello che si coglie di autobiografico nelle vicende dei glass - le bislaccherie e i noti tratti caratteriali che erano anche quelli di JD - sono i riflessi che personalmente amo di più nella sua scrittura. la ruvidità che si veste di ironia nel cogliere i tic e i normalissimi dettagli propri e altrui. oltre a una dose cospicua di ossessioni e timidezza (misanthropia?) che diventano il suo imprescindibile vizio di forma. «verso i vent'anni attraversai un breve periodo durante il quale combattei una strenua battaglia, perduta in partenza, per diventare un individuo socievole che ama la compagnia». ecco jerome d. salinger, sono proprio contenta che non ti sia riuscito.

Annie says

I wish I could give this 4.5 or 4.8 or something like that. Doesn't matter carpenters. We shall not let ourselves get caught under the beam as pendants resembling penny counters, we shall rise above the fascism and rally. 4 is very dependable after all.

Auguste says

Okay, I'll never be able to be partial when it comes to Salinger - merely stopping myself from raving is hard enough. However, these two novellas constitute for me (and I'm sure I'm far from alone in this) a mystical experience: they're part of what, to me, defines holiness. It's not easy, this sort of writing, no matter how deceptively it mimics a stream-of-consciousness rant: I am convinced Salinger toiled over every single word, so as to create this rambling sort of mantra. Schubert can be like that as well - he can throw so much beauty at you, he can meander endlessly all over the stave just because he can't let go, not yet, and that's why his String Quintet (also a religious experience for me, a sort of Horcrux) isn't as popular as it ought to be: many people just find him tiresome. But just as poor Schubert composed for no one at all, just to make his life a tiny bit more bearable, so did, in all likelihood, Salinger plunge into this often unbearable stream of words and saved himself another day. (And here comes the embarrassing part, which I cannot avoid: I spent nearly eighteen months translating this book into Greek; in the midst of working on the first novella, I suffered a

psychotic attack and had to be hospitalized - and then I returned to the text almost a broken man, or one barely holding his brokenness together. I could never do it justice, of course, perhaps no one could, but still, this lovely, painfully lovely book, was a big part of the restorative process. You the man, Jerry, you the man.)

Teresa Proença says

Do que li de Salinger (quase tudo, que não é muito...) senti sempre que algo me escapou; talvez por isso este fascínio pelas suas escritas...

Este livro é composto de dois contos que complementam **Franny e Zooey** e **Um Dia Perfeito Para o Peixe Banana** (incluído em **Nove Histórias**), cujas personagens são a família Glass e os sete meninos prodígios, posteriores adultos angustiados e inquietantes...

A segunda história não é de boa leitura, por o narrador (Salinger?) se perder em divagações pouco interessantes e que impacientam o leitor, que espera conhecer melhor Seymour e compreender os motivos que levaram ao seu suicídio.

"Seymour disse uma vez que a única coisa que fazemos durante as nossas vidas é ir de um pequeno bocado de Solo Sagrado para o imediato. Será que nunca se engana?"

A primeira história é uma perfeição.

É o dia do casamento de Seymour - que sentimos como a personagem principal - embora nunca apareça e seja retratado por uma galeria de criaturas extraordinariamente divertidas.

Uma preciosidade!

Jacob says

October 2009

So basically, I'm waiting for Salinger to die.

I don't mean that maliciously. Really. I bear no ill will towards the man, and I'd wish him a long and pleasant life as a hermit, full of good health and completely lacking in the company of stupid humans--except, well, he's already had his. The old man is ninety, slowly doddering his way to ninety-one. Hasn't published in decades. No one's seen him in years; he doesn't even yell at those durn kids to get off his lawn because then people would know where he lives. Heck, he might have another ten years in him. Or he could die tomorrow, in which case this whole review would be really tasteless. So let me make this clear: I don't *want* Salinger to die. I'm just waiting for him to do so.

But I digress. Thing is, I never read Salinger before this year. Although I went through my own Angry Teenager Phase back in high school, I somehow missed reading The Catcher in the Rye--which I always confused with *Field of Dreams*, for some reason, but whatever. Got to it over the summer, as a little diversion before picking up Nine Stories; Catcher was boring and disappointing, the stories were pretty good. Didn't have high expectations for Franny and Zooey or this one, but I figured they'd be quick reads--and anyway, there didn't seem to be much point in only reading half of Salinger's published work when he's

only written four books. And that, right there, is proof that I read Salinger for all the wrong reasons. I only picked up Nine Stories out of genuine interest in, and curiosity for, Salinger's work--the others I read (re: suffered through) out of curiosity about Salinger himself. Here's this mad old recluse who hasn't published anything in thirty years--I wonder what makes him so great? Man, Holden Caulfield is a whiny little shit; I bet his other stuff is complete crap, too; hey, I was right, no wonder he's in hiding; &etc. If I had read these books purely out of interest in the stories, instead of a perverse fascination with Old Man J. D., perhaps I would've appreciated them more. Perhaps.

This brings me back to Salinger's eventual death. Why do I bring this up? Simple: in my curiosity about Salinger and my interest in his reclusive, hermit-like, hasn't-published-anything-since-the-Sixties existence, the reason I'm thinking about his completely natural and far-future demise is this: all of Salinger's other stories will get published. Simple as that. Soon as the old man goes up to that big field of rye in the sky, his family will descend like vultures on his cell/cave/underground bunker, tear through every safe, and publish every scrap of work the man has written, but not published, since 1965. And the paranoid in me, the conspiracy theorist, believes that J. D. Salinger really does have a dozen or so safes full of sequels to The Catcher in the Rye, as well as the complete family history of the Glass Family (with a thousand songs of praise to the near-messianic Seymour), and a host of other, unrelated stories.

Of course, this is the part of me that also suspects Harper Lee of having written a dozen other novels, locked away, never to be published with To Kill a Mockingbird, but I'm probably right--about Salinger, at least. 'Sides, a quick visit to the Wikipedia page shows he has about two dozen uncollected and/or unpublished stories floating around, in forgotten literary journals and anthologies, that will probably never see the light of bookstores, ever, until Salinger croaks.

And let's face it: it would be interesting to see them. It would be nice to see The Stories of J. D. Salinger, or Salinger: The Collected Works, 1940 to 1965 and 1966 to 20--, or even The Further Adventures of Holden Caulfield (ghost stories, boarding school mysteries, boarding school erotica, and so on) published, reviewed, read, etc. I probably wouldn't read any of it, but it would look nice--and that, to me, seems to be the distinguishing characteristic of Salinger's books: that they *look nice* in their slim, bare, austere covers. The stories inside may be mostly mediocre and somewhat overrated (to me), but at least the books *look nice* on a shelf. And a handsomely bound edition of The Complete Works of J. D. Salinger would probably *look nice* too.

But I digress, again--and I probably sound a bit pretentious there, thinking I can judge Salinger's existing work. I don't even *like* his work; I'm clearly a crude and unsophisticated little turd, so who am I to say anything about the man? What a phoney. But whatever. When Salinger dies, in 2024, at the ripe old age of 105, perhaps I'll have repented and learned to love his work like I clearly should. When that happens, I'll be the first to read Catcher in the Rye 2: Catch Harder.

Edit--1/28/2010: Salinger died last night. I wrote this review three months ago. You can't prove anything!

Mariel says

"This is too grand to be said (so I'm just the man to say it), but I can't be my brother's brother for nothing, and I know – not always, but I know – there is no single thing I do that is more important than going into that awful Room 307. There isn't one girl in there, including the Terrible Miss Zabel, who is not as much my

sister as Boo Boo or Franny. They may shine with the misinformation of the ages, but they shine. This thought manages to stun me: There's no place I'd really rather got right now than into Room 307. Seymour once said that all we do our whole lives is go from one little piece of Holy Ground to the next. Is he never wrong?
Just go to bed, now. Quickly. Quickly and slowly."

Yesterday I went to the public library after work to read. I sometimes like to read there because it is a way to be around other people and not be around other people. When I'm too socially anxious but too sad to just give up and be alone this is a good and helpful thing for me to do. I wrote about this in another review but I can't remember if it was one I ended up posting to goodreads. It is my life anyway. Open the pages and hope this time I'll fit. Anyway, I read Salinger's *Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters & Seymour: An Introduction* that I hadn't read since I was a teenager (the first time I was probably locked in my room while listening to The Cure). That hadn't been the plan (I'm currently reading more than a few other books). Maybe my mind was doing something good for me because I think it helped.

Did anyone else ever get a sad out of place feeling from the Glass family? From *The Catcher in the Rye*, also? Now I don't care at all about the wedding party and their totally self unaware presumptions on the brother of the bridegroom they announce as a despicable human being. I am not worried that I would be as they are. I guess my library trick isn't too far away from Buddy's leaping into a car full of strangers headed to some place he doesn't belong (the apartment of his sister-in-law's parents) because he is lonely. I'm not worried about that, though. It's like when I vow to stop talking this time absolutely for good and when I forget how wretched I feel for talking I start talking again kind of impermanent damage. Those kinds of awkward experiences can be forgotten about if you go to the movies or manage to take a nap. It feels like a different day. Buddy will not be stuck in that car forever. The stage play of the wedding after party will change into another memory. I wouldn't worry about not being good enough for them, now. Muriel learned, to her fiancé Seymour's dismay, to disuse her natural vocabulary of "cute". I feel closer to her estrangement when her husband cannot speak in her language, or rather she cannot trust that he does or doesn't hear her when she doesn't know what she wants. But I wasn't worried about that either. Muriel is a stranger to me and I'm not worried. I'm not worried about tanned faces and asking for your husband's mail in a vacation hotel and is that all there is to life, and if that's all they want out of life is that all there is going to be of my life. I'm not that bothered about it, anymore. Seymour knows his brother Buddy enough to know that he would despise of Muriel's reason to live. This is closer but also not it. You can't sleep away this disconnection. My anxiety and sadness about the Glass family is that there will never be another Seymour, Buddy, Boo Boo, Franny and Zooey. Buddy has Seymour always. He doesn't have Seymour any longer. Seymour killed himself. It was in another story. Seymour the genius and Seymour the best of them all. Seymour is the Glass sky ceiling. Seymour is the O-zone layer protection. I think about them like going into the world and you will never meet anyone you love as much. The last line in *Seymour: An Introduction* that I quote in the beginning of this review made me feel a lot better. I had forgotten all about that. If he meant it. I think he did. Will he continue to mean it? What if you don't have that family and you can never have that family because everyone else already has a Seymour, Buddy, Boo Boo, Franny and Zooey?

This is what I had remembered about this book: Seymour the poet. Of all that stayed in my mind fingertips it was Seymour writing his haiku poems. I thought some times about how the Japanese masters didn't need to use italics. I remember thinking some low self esteem thing that I'd never be able to communicate without the visual stress. I wondered how it would feel to be happy when writing as Buddy was. I remember Buddy with his shield of defense against those who would argue against their authenticity, those haiku poems of Seymour's that were all double haikus. Since reading Nabokov's *Speak, Memory* I'm thinking a lot about his idea that it is all positional. *"The arms of consciousness reach out and grope, and the longer they are the better. Tentacles, not wings, are Apollo's natural members."* Buddy writes that we only have three or four

truly indispensable poets. He doesn't say which they are so no one could argue that he left so and so off. Four? Only four? I remembered how he wanted to tell the wedding party in "Raise high" that his brother could never have written a word and he would meet you with himself as the poetry. That's the positional. He is positioned in his family. It was a place anywhere else that wasn't helped. I envy Buddy for his ceiling of Seymour but it also makes me sad. Was he going to reach for anything else or would it always be the first family corner? I'm relieved that it isn't the sadness that I was afraid of having of not being good enough. Whatever he says about only four. He is a man missing his brother and he wishes that he was a man who came at you as himself as poetry.

How could I have forgotten the nine stitches? One of the women (I don't have the book with me and I have already forgotten her name) mentions that Seymour (she overhears Muriel's mother saying this) that Seymour hit Muriel and she had to get nine stitches. When they were on their child genius radio show they were on the child genius radio show with another little girl, chosen by Seymour himself, who was not to Buddy's mind all that brilliant but a fine singer. Seymour threw a rock at Charlotte Mayhew the fine singer who was good looking. She had to have nine stitches. He threw himself in the rock, is my feeling, helpless to another reaction for what he was feeling. I imagine the foot stamping delight in being on the show together, to be "on" for her, ended with the rock.

Another thing I don't care about that I imagine I probably did when I was younger was that radio program genius thing. Something about people being smarter than they should be at an age when I didn't feel up to the task of where I already was. Now I don't care about Franny feeling like she could fly. I used to jump off the tops of dressers when I was a little girl, flapping my arms in flight. No light bulb dust on my fingers. I flew when I kept believing that I could. It was a lonely feeling when Boo Boo longs to see Franny when she hears her on the radio. Someone was moved by her dreams. What was it like to have someone care about your dreams that way? That's a foreign feeling. It's kind of sad and I wish I had a rock.

Seymour left a poem before he dies about a man on a plane and across the aisle is a little girl. This little girl has a friend who is a doll. The girl turns her friend's face to look at the man. I have this fear of not being seen, of having no response... It is an unsettling image this girl with her doll who stares. It would be bad enough to be looked at by the girl, or just the doll. The girl pointing the doll to look is upsetting. I hope that never happens to me in a wrong kind of a mood. I would have to do something to make me feel like it had never happened or it would bother my mind too much. I can see that upsetting someone like Seymour to have to write about it, if it happened or not (Buddy thinks it didn't and Boo Boo believes it did). The writing about it is making it happen and if that's the response... I wouldn't want to be Buddy even when he is helplessly happy in a sitting room with his fiancée and her mother. There's something about both Buddy and Seymour that unsettled me. It's the precocious aspect that is rooted in someone very young with a promise of something that is going to happen. In *For Esme, with Love and Squalor* collection they both make friends with these girls. I always wondered what would happen if the pleasure wasn't in the surprise of hearing what you didn't expect to hear out of someone you didn't expect to hear it from. Seymour could be kinder, such as finding Muriel's mother brave to live in her small world without imagination, and he doesn't even mean it condescendingly to pity her. I wonder what would have happened to them if they didn't have a ceiling to meet up against? No expectation of company to expect to hear from? I hope Buddy meant it that he wanted to see those girls in his class room and find someone else to hear from that wasn't his family. It would be sad to live life like someone who stopped enjoying music past the age of seventeen. Nothing ever sounded good again, and they keep playing the same hits and each time the newness gets less. Oh yeah, I felt better because I hoped that holy ground could be found again in new experiences. That you don't have to feel sad like you can't be like family with all new people because you aren't new anymore.

I'll try to remember Seymour coming at people as a poem and those nine stitches this time because I feel

helpless for the right reaction and the right words when I see something that makes me feel small. Why do I feel small? I guess I'll probably think about Muriel and Seymour together because there's a small feeling between them too. I'm a little creeped out that they would need each other's grace that way. It wasn't that way within the Glass family. At least not in the untouchable past, where they would never stop loving each other.

I looked at other reviews of this book a minute ago. I guess other people on goodreads didn't think about Seymour's poetry as much as I did. I wonder if that means that others didn't feel like throwing rocks at beauty too. I always felt ugly. If it was a game of rock, paper, scissors I'd be missing the paper and my pen would have been less mighty than my knife. I wonder if Seymour would have felt differently if he had had a Seymour like Buddy had him. Someone to look up to, maybe, so you could feel like at least someone knew what to say.

Vinicius Castilho says

I'd give the first part 5 stars, but the second part didn't really do it for me. The neverending stream of consciousness which seems to go nowhere, the constant 'meta-text' (always very self-deprecating) and the long descriptions of mundane events (and the not-thorough-enough descriptions of actual 'juicy' bits) made it a tough read for me. After reading "franny", "zooey" and "raise high the roofbeam, carpenters" I fell in love with the Glass family (and especially with Seymour, through the eyes of his siblings), but when it came to actually reading about him through Buddy's account in "Seymour, an introduction" all my admiration died a painful death as I turned each page.

Gypsy says

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?????????? ??? ??????. :))

Joshb says

Salinger is very, very high on the sentimental favorites list, which makes this difficult to assess objectively - so let's start with the easy half of this two-novella collection.

Raise High The Roof Beam, Carpenters is wonderful, and while it occasionally dips a little too deeply into the preciousness well (the same well that Salinger comes oh-so-close to drowning in in Franny and Zooey), it works, and, if you've read A Perfect Day for Bananafish, serves as a pretty chilling prequel to the entire Glass family saga. (And if you haven't read APDFB, what are you waiting for? It's only one of the best short stories ever, and Nine Stories as a whole is indispensable.)

As for Seymour: An Introduction, well... I'm not quite sure what to say. (A well-placed "hoo, boy..." might be appropriate here.) I feel like Salinger had this point gotten himself into a holding pattern where he only knows how to end stories with sudden epiphanies, and he gives us three, all somewhat bargain-basement: 1. Seymour is, for Buddy, something to be given away to the world, to those who never had him. Well, alright. 2. That a Zen approach to writing, where one merely writes without aiming, is the only true way of hitting a target. (In some ways this story, with its tiring constant appeals for our astonished approval at Salinger's erudition, could be seen as a direct example of this theory, but I won't bite.) 3. A re-warmed-over repackaging of the essential lesson of Zooey, that the students that Buddy despises are no less his siblings than Seymour, Boo Boo, Walt, et al. Reading this story, one entirely understands the arguments that Hapworth 16, 1924 was proof of a teetering mind finally gone mad.

But if Salinger's work is as embedded into your DNA as it's become for me, you forgive these flaws for much the same reason it'd be sour and nitpickish to criticize the letter of a friend during hard times - one knows how deeply Buddy must be hurting. It's just a shame that Salinger didn't take over in the third-person, and let poor Buddy take a day off from the task of constantly recounting Seymour.

Read this one after you read the other Glass family stories - these serve as an effective (albeit uneven) coda for the entire affair.

Paul Bryant says

In retrospect it's a great shame The Carpenters missed their golden opportunity to release a single called "Raise High the Roof Beam".

Rolls says

Anyone who read my review of Salinger's "Nine Stories" knows I love this man's work to death. I've read and enjoyed "Catcher in the Rye" and "Franny and Zooey" a whole hell of a lot too. I picked this up with a heart filled with admiration and optimism. Well that optimism was dashed upon the rocks of Salinger's self-indulgence and apparent disregard for his readers.

This book compiles two short stories first published in the New Yorker and are the final two entries in Salinger's Glass family saga. "Raise High the Roofbeams, Carpenters" focuses on Buddy Glass and his trip to his brother Seymour's wedding. "Seymour: an Introduction" again finds Buddy downstage center and is his way of coming to terms with his brother's memory through literature.

Like "Franny and Zooey" we are served up first a good story followed by a not so good story. However where "Zooey" was rambling and a tad unfocused it was at least a short story. "Seymour" on the other hand is a goddamned mess. It reads like the notes an author would take down before actually starting the job of

composition. For every sentence of quality and clarity there seem to be pages upon pages of self-indulgent masturbation. This makes for an interminable and ultimately frustrating read.

It starts off promisingly though. "Raise High the Roofbeams..." is a delight. It is a comically poignant trip into the past. Buddy Glass getting over a bout of pleurisy in the camp hospital must get to New York and be the only family member at his brother Seymour's wedding. What follows is typical Seymour not to mention Salinger. As usual the characters are so well observed and vividly presented we can practically smell them. There is the usual masterful blending of the serious and the comic. Salinger doesn't so much write a story as create a world that he allows us to visit for a spell.

The greatest reward of course is getting to spend a few more moments with a member of the Glass family. In reading over all of Salinger's writing in the last few months I've become almost as obsessed with reading about them as Salinger is writing about them. That's why I thought despite warnings that I could indeed read and enjoy "Seymour." However it's total disregard for it's readers enjoyment almost dispelled the warm glow I felt after reading "Raise High the Roofbeams..."

So unless you have absolutely nothing better to read or do and you are a completist avoid "Seymour" like grim death.

Roula says

when i find myself in times of trouble...i read another book by j.d. salinger??

M. Sarki says

<http://msarki.tumblr.com/post/6577883...>

I hear myself out on the literary field of battle loudly cheering, and if you look hard enough you can see me flailing my arms as well. I have my own *Davega* to share. A gift to be given for the meek and serious among you. I am speaking to the seriously patient and long-suffering reader, and not instead to a citizen submissive or spineless in any way. I mean a searcher as I am; one looking for the hard truth and all its surprises.

The credentialed shine, but they shine with the misinformation of the ages, which is hard on a fellow like me. But they shine, and I recognize that, though it leaves a bad taste in my mouth to admit it. Do not worry, you may dismiss me as well, for I have no official credentials either.

A couple days ago I began reading the J.D. Salinger collected masterpiece *Raise High the Roofbeam, Carpenters* and *Seymour: An Introduction* again for the second time. The first time I read the book I was quite a bit younger, I had never been to NYC, and back then I was still pretty dumb about most things. Certainly I am wiser now thirty years later, have made my share of mistakes, been to NYC over twenty times, know the city quite well, and know I made an error in my previous assessment of this book. This is a fine piece of writing by Salinger and I enjoyed the book immensely. Both of them.

I think sometimes it is so hard to see. For instance, I now use reading glasses or else the words would be a constant blur. But I get Salinger where I couldn't while I was young. Yes, *The Catcher in the Rye* was somewhat of a bible and treatise for me way back then. It was easy to attach oneself to a book like that. But the best of them, *Raise High the Roofbeam, Carpenters* and *Seymour: An Introduction* are not for the young, though the young are always encouraged to read them all and get what they can out of the experience. And that is where the Seymour quote stating, "They may shine with the misinformation of the ages, but they shine" comes from. It is difficult to accept that Seymour thought them "pieces of Holy Ground", but he did, and that is what made him Seymour.

I am not surprised that so many readers did not like the second piece, *Seymour: An Introduction*. The most obvious common thread was the comment that *Raise High the Roofbeam, Carpenters* was more of a story, "a pleasure to read", it had a beginning a middle, and an end. A further negative comment that *Seymour: An Introduction* was composed as "stream of consciousness" I find particularly quite wrong. Buddy, the narrator, even explains to the reader that his writing here is more of a diary, written over several sittings, each taking thirty cups of coffee or more. The comments call the book "haphazard, disorganized, a bore". For the record I do not find *Seymour: An Introduction* a "rambling or diffuse read" at all. Anyone not wanting to learn more about writing, or even afraid of measuring up so to speak, to poetry in particular, would be well-advised to stay away from reading it at all. Very early on in my latest reading of this second book I was enamored with Buddy's claim of a lack of original American poets, a claim contemporary writers today still make, such as the quickly-rising fame of the dead guy, Roberto Bolaño. Buddy remarked that a clever professor might describe "...a poem of Seymour's being to the haiku what a double Martini is to the usual Martini." He also hoped it would not be himself who said such a thing, though he admitted profusely he was being garrulous and would also be justly accused of it. Buddy warns the reader at every turn what the reader is in for if he/she continues on to the bottom of the page. Buddy is not the most gracious or humblest of writers. He even thinks his reader might be dumb, and by the looks of the comments, I for one believe he is mostly correct in his assumption. But again, as Seymour said, "They may shine with the misinformation of the ages, but they shine..."

Seymour: An Introduction is simply written as Buddy says, in several sittings of thirty cups of coffee each. Does the coffee, the several sittings as if writing a diary, this "somewhat pustulous disquisition on my brother's poetry" make the Glass family, as a whole, to be regarded as mentally ill? I think not. The reader would be best served to mature and enjoy life's experiences for some years, come back to the novella at a time in life that has little to no demands on the reader but this own incessant impending death-wish slung not so casually over one's shoulder and waiting somewhat patiently for his end. Of course, a little great understanding of what good writing is, what demanding and taxing poetry can do for your damaged head, and the instincts to know that Buddy is not bullshitting you on the page but rather being the further teacher you always wanted to hold close to the vest and unleashed.

The layout of the book is easy to follow especially as Buddy explains everything to the dumb reader. It is possibly his affront on the reader's ability that the negative reviewer finds distasteful. It has often been said that truth hurts. I simply find the book a delightful read. *Seymour: An Introduction* meant nothing to me the first time through so many years ago. I credit my new understanding of the material to having been a student of Gordon Lish's from 1995 through 1997. Much of the same teachings by Buddy can be found in a ten-hour-straight Lish event. The same principles of "writing for history and not recreation, or because it is fun to do" persists there in Lish's class and also on these pages of *Seymour: An Introduction*.

One of my favorite segments in the book was Buddy telling about his father Les Glass asking Seymour, as an adult, if he remembered Joe Jackson giving him a ride on the handle bars of his famous shiny nickel-plated trick bicycle? Seymour's answer to his dad was that he wasn't sure he had ever gotten off Joe Jackson's

beautiful bicycle. And I guess that is my own *Davega* I am offering to you.

For the serious complainers who say that *Seymour: An Introduction* doesn't let us get to Seymour first hand, I suggest reading *A Perfect Day for Bananafish* collected in *Nine Stories*. It is a beautiful introduction for getting to know Seymour a little bit first-hand. I always recommend the reading of *Bananafish* to the people I love before they make their personal plunge into any of the Glass family memoirs.

Ashley Lauren says

There were times when I was reading this book that I wondered whether or not I should reconsider Salinger as my favorite author. I mean, these stories are all over the place... but then I realized why I love him so much. Salinger does not write "skim-worthy" sentences. I really feel like the depth of his writing cannot be grasped if a person is not reading them with the utmost concentration. His short stories (*Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters* and others I have read) seem, more or less, useless. In terms of a specific story, they are. But it's what a person *gains* from them, the thoughts that are provoked, that is crucial. Additionally, *Seymour, an Introduction*, was basically Salinger rambling on aimlessly about his brother. But it really made me consider the depth of his love, the tragedy of his death, the words and thoughts that Buddy Glass used years after the death... it was provoking and I found that I dog-eared a number of corners because a specific sentence or paragraph really called to me. I greatly admire Salinger's writing and am glad I completed this book.

Paquita Maria Sanchez says

It was with simultaneously satisfied and wistful closure that I shut this book. I guess I've now read all the Salinger in almost-chronological order. This book made me especially sad about that fact considering that I was very much aware of what was clearing away as I was vacuuming it up, yet I couldn't make myself sit with it and take it in as slowly as a long goodbye should warrant. Seymour Glass would not approve. Of course, it's likely that there are Salinger shorts out there that weren't published in any hyper-official, bookbound sense during his lifetime, and so there is still more to read, but my general understanding is if you were to evenly space Salinger's Official Publications out over the entirety of his adult timeline, he would release a book even less often than Terrence Malick directs a film. Reading this really paraded the shamefulness of that fact, at least for me. The really strange part of it all is, despite how absolutely self-contained in their perfection most of Salinger's sentences are, they just seem so completely honest and effortless in their rendering. Few people I've come across are so masterful at smacking the book out of you, the reader's, hand and talking to you directly, staring directly, baring directly. At no point does this man seem full of shit. There's zero peacocking here. This bird is just bashfully pretty despite itself.

Maybe I'm wrong, but I have come to the mostly uneducated assumption-conclusion that Salinger is the root of the oft-used character of the overly smart kid. Now, normally this annoys the crap out of me, what with all the suit-wearing pre-teens in horror movies these days who call their very average parents by their first names and somehow contain rivers of life-lessons that they haven't even remotely earned from experience, at least not within the world that has been sculpted by the screenwriter. However, Salinger manages to present a fairly compelling, and certainly nuanced, argument for the Glass family as believable though admittedly fictional construct. I won't explain away this point, because the building of the family members' individual and communal complexities is one of the great delights to be taken from reading this body of work. I'll just

say that, in my opinion, it works. It beyond just *works*.

Though I suppose I preferred the first story to the second, one of my favorite points in the book, and an effective summary of Seymour as haunting shadow and posthumously shoulder-seated voice of Zen for the members of this family, is the part about the marbles. For those of you who haven't read this book, a young Buddy (second-born Glass child) is playing marbles with a friend, and Seymour (first-born Glass child) says to him from the background "Could you try not aiming so much?" A fairly lengthy analysis of hyper-self-aware concentration versus the greeting of intuition and fancy-flight ensues. This state of mindless focus while also confidently casting oneself to the whims of fate is something that I'm sure we can all relate to. Some days, you rhythm just "rhythms" itself. Some moments, you're there and away, you see what you need to do, and rather than fretfully over-thinking whatever your immediate task may be, you find a place inside yourself, an immensely electric yet passing equilibrium, where you let yourself go and you go just right. If you will forgive a personal aside, one of the times like this for me was - you probably don't know that I was very briefly on a dart team, but I was - where pretty much mediocre-at-darts me was tasked with throwing the winning move. I won't detail the rules of Cricket here, but in short, it was absolutely crucial for me to hit two bullseyes in one turn consisting of three throws, or we would almost certainly lose. Though I had been stressed out the whole game through (competition makes me suck, even at things I'm good at), for some reason - maybe the booze, maybe resignation, maybe both - I stepped up to the throw line and just told myself "This will work. Or fuck it." Basically, I was so okay with losing at this point that I didn't carry the weight of that loss, and I just let go and visualized myself hitting the bullseye, while not spending my usual extensive amount of time and concentration attempting to aim. I just let my arm do its thing, and let my mind rest. I rapidly hit three bullseyes to the astonishment of my parents, my teammates, and especially the competing team. We won. It was one of my only "end of the inspirational high school movie where everyone cheers for the awesome underdog" moments in my life, and it was all due to this non-concentrated, resigned state which Salinger manages to so perfectly enunciate here. That's a very long way of me saying just a little of what Salinger can say in a paragraph or less. Is his magic, you see.

Since, no matter how much I'd like to, I will never be able to read Seymour's nonexistent poems, I suppose all that's left for me to do is reread *Catcher in the Rye*, considering it had been 17 years. Since I have absolutely adored all the Salinger I have read as an adult, my first, teenaged engagement with him more than deserves a revisiting. My boring 4-starring of Salinger's opus is less a one-star-striking criticism of a book I read almost two decades ago, and more a less than trustful regard of 14-year-old me by 30-year-old me, because how could I possibly have loved something awesome back when I was such a dumbass? We shall see how it goes, but my hopes are high. I only wish there were mountains more.

Parham says

??? ? ????? ?????? ?????? ?? ??? ???? ?????? ???

Ritinha says

Há sonhos nos quais se lêem livros, ouvem discos, vêem filmes, etc, tão impossivelmente perfeitos que, logo que se acorda, se dissipam tais obras oníricas na amnésia do regresso ao estado de alerta. Ler este Salinger foi como assistir a uma mais-que-perfeita mini-série realizada pelo Whit Stillman.

[Quem sabe dos meus guilty pleasures cinéfilos e do quanto aprecio a actividade «leitura» fica com a perfeita noção do motivo pelo qual guardo «os salingers» como as ocasiões para bolo de chocolate.]

Zi says

Give me a story that just makes me unreasonably vigilant. Keep me up till five only because all your stars are out, and for no other reason .

Reckoner says

Αγαπ? τον Σ?λιντζερ. Το ξ?ρετε γιατί? το ?χω γρ?ψει τ?σες φορ?ς πια που πρ?πει να σας ?χω κουρ?σει. Στο τελευτα?ο του λοιπ?ν βιβλ?ο νι?θω οτι πλησ?ασε πραγματικ? την τελει?τητα (και ?στερα αποσ?ρθηκε). Και οι δ?ο νουβ?λες αφορ?ν τον μεγ?λο αδερφ? της οικογ?νειας Γκλ?ς, τον Σ?υμουρ (και υπ?γεια, σχεδ?ν μυστικ? αποκαλ?πτουν πρ?γματα και για τον Μπ?ντυ). Στην πρ?τη νουβ?λα ο Σ?υμουρ ε?ναι απ?ν στον ?διο του το γ?μο και χ?ρη στο μπ?ρδεμα που προκαλε?ται τ?σσερα ?τομα θα βρεθο?ν, μαζ? και ο Μπ?ντυ να συζητο?ν και να προσπαθο?ν να καταλ?βουν τι π?γε στραβ?. Μονο που ο Μπ?ντυ δεν συζητ?, παρατηρε? μονο γιατ? ξ?ρει οτι κανε?ς δεν πρ?κειται να καταλ?βει τον αδερφ? του. Υπεκφε?γει, κρ?βεται και νι?θει οικει?τητα με τον τ?ταρτο της παρ?ας ενα χαρο?μενο κωφ?λαλο γερ?κο. Ισ?ς γιατ? εκε?νος δεν πρ?κειται να κατακρ?νει ? να σχολι?σει το παραμικρ? για τον αδερφ? του. Το οτι επιλ?γει ?να κωφ?λαλο δεν ε?ναι τυχα?ο. ?σως με προφαν? τρ?πο ο Σ?λιντζερ αναδεικν?ει για ?λλη μια φορ? τις προβληματικ?ς σχ?σεις και την απ?λεια ουσιαστικ?ς επικοινων?ας.

Το πρ?βλημα εντε?νεται στην δε?τερη νουβ?λα συνειδησιακ?ς ρο?ς ?που ?λα μοι?ζουν αυθ?ρμητα και γν?σια και την ?δια στιγμ? τοσο προσεκτικ? τοποθετημ?να. Ο Μπ?ντυ προσπαθε? να φτι?ξει, να περιγρ?ψει το πορτρα?το του αποθαν?ντος αδερφου? του μα οι λ?ξεις μοι?ζουν λ?γες. Την ?δια στιγμ? μαθα?νουμε πρ?γματα και γι τον ιδιο καθ?ς βλ?πουμε τα πρ?γματα απο μια συγκριτικ? σκοπι?. Και παρ?λο που προσπαθε? να ξεφ?γει απο αυτ?, ο ιδιος ο αδερφ?ς του σε ?να παλι? γρ?μμα του λ?ει οτι η ατομικ?τητα του καθεν?ς αρχ?ζει εκε? που ξεκιν?ει ο στεν?ς σ?νδεσμ?ς που ?χουν μεταξ? τους. Ε?ναι τοσο γλυκ? και τρυφερ? να βλ?πεις τον Μπ?ντυ να προσπαθε? να περιγρ?ψει τον αγαπημ?νο του αδερφ? που τοσο θα?μαζε. ?λλες φορ?ς γ?νεται γλυκ?πικρο, γεμ?το χιο?μορ και ειρωνε?α απ?ναντι στα π?ντα (κυρ?ως τους λογοτεχνικο?ς κ?κλους, την ψυχαν?λυση, την φιλοσοφ?α του Ζεν κλπ.). Η αναρχ?α που επικρατε? στο μυαλ? και στην ψυχ? του Μπ?ντυ ε?ναι πολ? πιο αποκαλ?πτικη απο ?σως ?να εθ?γραμμο πορτρα?το γεμ?το τ?ξη. Γιατ? θα ?μοιαζε φτιαχτ? και οχι γν?σιο και ειλικριν?ς. Και με αυτ? που μ?νουμε ε?ναι με αποσπασματικ? μικρ? θα?ματα που αφορ?ν τη ζω? τους. Στον πυρ?να των παιδι?ν θαυμ?των δεν υπ?ρχουν βιβλ?α, μελ?τες, ταλ?ντα ? οτι ?λλο αλλα η ιδια?τερη σχ?ση και η αγ?πη που τους δ?νει. Ε?ναι ?σως η πολυτιμ?τερη ιστορ?α για την αδερφικ? αγ?πη και συντροφικ?τητα (πνευματικ? ? οτι ?λλο) ?χω διαβ?σει.

Bruno says

Salinger è forse l'unico autore che mi piace leggere a piccoli bocconi durante la giornata, nei momenti più svariati. Qualche pagina a colazione tra un sorso di caffè e l'altro, un paio di morsi per aprire l'appetito in

attesa del pranzo (quando sono abbastanza fortunato da non dovermelo preparare da solo), nel divino relax postprandiale, durante l'immancabile lettura da *salle de bain* (nella speranza che il francese renda l'immagine meno disgustosa) e sgranocchiato in quell'arco di tempo incredibilmente dilatato che segue al classico messaggio "Sto arrivando!" dell'amico ritardatario.

Con questo non voglio dire che si tratti di una lettura poco impegnativa da usare per riempire i buchi di noia, tutt'altro! *Seymour. Introduzione*, infatti, è proprio la dimostrazione della complessità di Salinger con tutti i suoi caratteristici sproloqui, ma è una lettura che diverte immensamente, nonostante molto spesso ci si chieda cosa stia farneticando il Glass di turno. Ogni singola pagina è un flash che riesce a trasmettermi delle immagini così vivide della famiglia Glass, in tutte le loro peculiari pose e moine, da farmi compagnia per un'intera giornata e vorrei citare a sproposito frasi di Buddy, Seymour o Franny, ma nessuno mi capirebbe.

PS: Caro J.D., ti odio immensamente per non averci fatto dono delle poesie di Seymour. Egoista!

Con rivoltante affetto,

Bruno
