



Something Rich and Strange: Selected Stories

Ron Rash

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From the critically acclaimed, award-winning author of *Serena* and *The Cove*, thirty-four of his finest short stories, collected in one volume

No one captures the complexities of Appalachia—a rugged, brutal landscape of exquisite beauty—as evocatively and indelibly as author and poet Ron Rash. Winner of the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award, two O. Henry prizes, and a finalist for the PEN/Faulkner Award, Rash brilliantly illuminates the tensions between the traditional and the modern, the old and the new south, tenderness and violence, man and nature. Though his focus is regional, the themes of Rash's work are universal, striking an emotional chord that resonates deep within each of our lives.

Something Rich and Strange showcases this acclaimed master's artistry and craftsmanship in thirty-two stories culled from previously published collections and two available for the first time in book form: "Outlaws" and "Shiloh." Each work of short fiction demonstrates Rash's dazzling ability to evoke the heart and soul of this land and its people—men and women inexorably tethered to the geography that defines and shapes them. Filled with suspense and myth, hope and heartbreak, and told in language that flows like "shimmering, liquid poetry" (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*), *Something Rich and Strange* is an iconic work from an American literary virtuoso.

Something Rich and Strange: Selected Stories Details

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From Reader Review *Something Rich and Strange: Selected Stories* for online ebook

Dianne says

A collection of the best Ron Rash short stories - I had read quite a few of these before, but enjoyed reading them again. If you haven't read Ron Rash yet, this collection or *Serena* are great places to start.

Sheer perfection.

Elizabeth says

Ron Rash is a national treasure.
READ HIM.

Peter says

I'm glad I'm not a writer. Reading Ron Rash would make me give up. Not since Flannery O'Connor has someone been able to invoke a sense of place with such deceptively simple prose. Amazing.

Trish says

Ron Rash is too good to miss. If you aren't familiar with his name, you *must* read a story or two, just so that you know his style, his subject. He writes about the Carolina Blue Ridge Mountain section of the Appalachians and his subjects are the wide range of mostly forgotten folks who live there, out of common view. We recognize them—their needs, resentments, their motivations—instantly though we wouldn't claim to be them.

This is a collection of thirty-two stories culled from earlier works plus two new ones at the very end, "Outlaws" and "Shiloh," that have not been previously collected.

One of my favorite stories, "Three A.M. and the Stars are Out," is reprinted here from an earlier collection, *Nothing Gold Can Stay*. It tells of a retired veterinarian who still gets calls from his old customers and he still goes to help out. His wife is dead four months and he sometimes forgets she's not there to answer back when a newspaper article prompts his comment.

The time frame in Rash's stories stretch from the Civil War to today. Another favorite story is the first in this collection, called "Hard Times," about depression-era Appalachian life. A farmer with a bitter and disagreeable wife discovers eggs are missing from his Bantam's nest and resolves to catch the culprit.

Back-country superstitions and ways brought down from olden times play a part in the lives of people. "The Corpse Bird" features an owl who brings bad tidings, and a college-educated man visits a Pentacostal church

to be cured in “Chemistry.” The scourge of drug abuse features in several stories, as naturally told as though it were endemic.

Rash polishes his stories until there is not a word too many nor out of place. He has also written novels, one of which is due out as a feature film in February 2015, starring Bradley Cooper and Jennifer Lawrence, called *Serena*. It looks as though it is shot on location in the Appalachian range, but in fact it was shot in Prague, Czech Republic and Denmark. Though the film does not garner high marks yet, I think we’d agree it probably isn’t the actors’ fault. Probably read the book first so you won’t be disappointed.

Lynn says

I’d read quite a few of these in other collections but they were even better the second time around. I wanted to savor these and read them as in-between treats, but I couldn’t leave them alone. Oh well, maybe I’ll gain self-control in my next reread.

Cathrine ?? says

I first discovered Ron Rash’s writing when I read his novels, and then followed with *Burning Bright*, a selection of his short stories. Not a fan of shorts, I was completely captivated by each tale set throughout the region of Appalachia. The haunting stories and Mr. Rash’s exceptional talents as a writer have stayed with me. I was excited to begin this new compilation, only to discover that there are only two new stories in this book, as the rest were previously published, including selections from *Burning Bright*. No matter, I loved revisiting the ones I was familiar with and having the opportunity to read his earlier works culled from different resources. If you want to experience and savor short stories at their finest, look no further.

?Karen says

3.5 stars

Thirty-five or so selected short stories by the most eloquent writer, Ron Rash, spanning a century or more of life in Appalachia. But it’s about so much more, as it tackles love and marriage, hate and pride, meth and other drugs du jour, the Civil War and Vietnam Nam, and I could go on and on. In the first 10 minutes alone, it had me cringing, not once, but twice. And then it had me laughing as well, or at times putting me nearly to sleep, and even scratching my head at some of the endings left open and flapping in the breeze. All in all, some delicious stories and not as dark as I had expected after the first story.

Julie Christine says

“Sense of place is the sixth sense, an internal compass and map made by memory and spatial perception

together.”

? Rebecca Solnit, *Savage Dreams: A Journey into the Landscape Wars of the American West*

In *Something Rich and Strange*, a collection of thirty-two previously published and two new short stories, Ron Rash demonstrates this sixth sense, this sense of place, to shiveringly acute degree. His place is the mountains and valleys of southwestern North Carolina, the heart of Appalachia.

Rash's stories span generations, from the Civil War through the Depression, the Vietnam War to the war in Iraq. Each story is sloped and slanted and ridged by the land, dense with fog, wet with rain, seeping with humidity. Caution must be taken when entering the sheltering cool of the North Carolina woods, where menacing creatures lurk: snakes and bears and men with shotguns; just as caution must be taken when entering a Rash story: sorrow, violence and madness wait in the shadows.

In this Appalachian Garden of Eden, good battles with evil. A pawn-shop owner finds his brother and sister-in-law huddled beneath blankets in an unheated trailer in “Back of Beyond.” Their son and his meth-addicted friends have taken over their farmhouse, selling off bits and pieces of the parents’ lives to support their habit. In “Those Who Are Dead Are Only Now Forgiven” Jody and Lauren have planned their escape from their childhood home for years: college, jobs, marriage will save them. But Jody, home from his first year of university, finds Lauren has succumbed to the siren song of meth. Can he save her? An arsonist in “Burning Bright” is a thoughtful and considerate lover, offering a widow in her sixties a chance at new love. In the collection's opening story, “Hard Times,” hunger during the Depression is outsize by a man’s pride and compassion has an expiration date.

Madness lingers, driving characters to moments of inexplicable violence, as in “Night Hawks,” where a former sixth-grade teacher finds shelter in the midnight to six a.m. shift at the radio station. “Into the Gorge,” old-timer Jesse, out harvesting ginseng on federal land—land that used to belong to his family—encounters a forest ranger and in a heartbeat, things take a disastrous turn.

Women are often vulnerable in Rash's wild mountains, but the Confederate soldier in “Lincolmites” is no match against a knitting needle, and a runaway trusty doesn’t get very far once he meets a young, angelic farmwife in “The Trusty.”

Yes, it’s true. There are few moments of redemption in *Something Rich and Strange*. In “Three A.M. and the Stars Were Out,” one of the most tender of the collection, a vet and a farmer, both in their eighties, help a cow birth a breached calf. It is a poignant moment in a long-standing friendship, recalling the deep bonds author Kent Haruf—another who wrote with such a profound sense of place—created between his characters. But this tenderness is rare. If you’ve read any Ron Rash, you have some idea of what to expect. His eye is unflinching, he bores down to his characters’ tender cores and splits them open, exposing pink flesh and pumping blood or putrid decay to the warm, humid, North Carolina night.

Rash’s writing is marvelous and his mastery of the short story breathtaking. He wrings full stories with astonishing economy of plot—many are mere pages long—yet each is rendered in vivid detail. You have the sense that you are eavesdropping into these lives, seeing, hearing, smelling Rash’s world before the characters walk away, leaving you wondering what might become of their Shakespearean-tragic lives.

karen says

a true story of what just happened:

this book landed on my desk.

OH MY GOD A NEW RON RASH AND IT'S HUUUUUGE BEST DAY EVER I AM GOING TO GO HOME RIGHT NOW TO READ IT AND NO ONE CAN STOP ME!!!

then:

HEY, WAIT A MINUTE!!!

dawning realization.

these are..... OLD STORIES!!!!

sigh.

still happy, but quite deflated.
not going home right now to read it.

Straw says

All I want to do is find Mr Rash, have coffee, and make him tell me stories all damn day long.

Larry Smith says

Ron Rash is often billed as a “Southern” or an “Appalachian” writer, and it’s true that he writes from the heart of a place and its people, but this should not confine him, any more than Faulkner is confined by Mississippi or Hemingway by Upper Michigan. It’s not a box, then, but an open window into his work and world. True, he chooses to live in Western North Carolina where he grew up and now works, teaching at Western Carolina University, but his is very much a contemporary American writer.

He is the author of five prizewinning novels, including *Serena* and *One Foot in Eden*, and four collections of poetry as well as five collections of stories, among them *Burning Bright*, *Nothing Gold Can Stay*, and *Chemistry and Other Stories*. This opus collection of his short fiction (his favorite form) is drawn from all of the short fiction.

He brings his poet’s eyes to the images of his people and place and his native ears to the language of that locale. One of the best tales, “Into the Gorge” opens with his description: “His great-aunt had been born on this land, lived on it eight decades, and knew it as well as she knew her husband and children. That was what she’d always claimed, and could tell you to the week when the first dogwood blossom would brighten the ridge, the first blackberry darken and swell enough to harvest.” This story moves from the aunt’s demise in the woods to a simple yet wild story of Jesse’s misfortune when hunting ginseng. It is one of the most plotted

of his stories and one of the most troubling.

Typically, Ron Rash writes what we might term slice-of-life fiction, where the story seems to happen with the same absence of form that life itself. He has declared that he locates character and place and then tries to stay out of the way of the story. And so they often end as they start in the middle of circumstance. But the characters, the dialogue, and the images are so vivid they hold you close. It's like stopping in a local dinner, sipping your coffee, and overhearing the talk and watching the faces of those sitting in the next booth.

The time frame ranges from depression times up to the most modern. "Hard Times" opens with Jacob and Edna on their farm surrounded by the poverty of neighbors. It's a beautiful story and one of the most tender. Ron Rash's writing resonates with our lives.

- See more at: <http://www.nyjournalofbooks.com/book-...>

Erica says

This is my first ever encounter with Ron Rash and that's only because karen made me do it.

I mean, I've known who the guy is for years. I work in a library, after all; I just never felt the need to read any of his stuff. But karen's always, "i love this dude!" (paraphrasing) so I figured, I'm always up for knowing how karen ticks a little better. I should read this anthology of short stories and that will get me up to speed!

And now I realize I've really been robbing myself of some good literature while not reading this author. He may be a writer of southern lit and grit and Hobbesian morality but I have some poor midwest in me and I live in mountains so there's overlap with his characters' lives and mine plus he says what he says so well, sometimes in spare prose and sometimes in ridiculous scenarios. I liked it.

In the case of these stories, I was impressed how one would link to the next and themes and ideas were repeated throughout, sometimes in the form of a character or characteristic, sometimes in a title hearkening back to a situation that had happened in an earlier story. It's all quite pleasing.

Here's what I thought of each story. Please note - they're all well-written and completely evocative of the theme/feel/whatever being presented. Some I just enjoyed hearing more than others and my ratings reflect only how entertained I felt with each tale, not how well the story is written:

Hard Times - 4 stars

Only the bantam eggs go missing from a henhouse during the Depression era and a farmer who used to love his wife has a hard time reconciling with how hard she's become.

While I knew what was happening as soon as the missing eggs were mentioned, I'm pleased with how it all turned out. Also, I have never heard of catching snakes like that! It's horrific but also fascinating but awfully cruel.

3 AM and the Stars Were Out - 4 stars

Retired vet and recent widower gets a call at 2am from his BFF whose cow won't birth her calf. He goes over and they get the calf out and talk in the dark of the early morning.

It's such a quiet story about love and grief and friendship and looking back at a whole life lived and it's beautiful.

The Ascent - 3 stars

Christmas break: 11-year-old Jared finds a downed plane in the Great Smoky Mountains. It offers him treasure, hope, and salvation.

This one's a bit heartbreaking, mostly in how much Jared's parents love him but can't get their shit together so it doesn't matter at all what they feel for him.

Night Hawks - 4 stars

Jenny is a radio DJ from 12am-6am. Her boss, Barry, warns her the solitude of that time is going to get to her, she's the 3rd DJ in 18 months, but solitude is exactly what she needs.

I liked this one specifically because of the aloneness. Aloneness can be a wonderful balm for the soul, sometimes.

The Trusted - 4 stars

Sinkler, a grifter, a con man, a prisoner on a chain gang, is sent to a farmhouse for water where he meets a girl, Lucy.

He should probably be careful.

Mwahahahaha

Back of Beyond - 4 stars

One winter, in the early days of meth, Parson, the town's pawn shop owner, has to get his methy nephew in line before the kid brings down the entire family.

I pictured my own family in these roles.

Lincolmites - 3 stars

This is during the Civil War.

Lily is left behind to take care of the farm.

She takes care of it just fine.

Once, I had thought I loved Civil War stories after first ever reading *The Red Badge of Courage* but as I tried to find another story like that one, I realized I just liked that book, not Civil War stories. This was pretty good, though.

Into the Gorge - 2 stars

Jesse's great aunt is out working when she's old, not listening to others when they say she can't. And then she goes missing and her body is found in the gorge, down where the old homestead was.

When it's Jesse's turn to be old, he realizes he needs some savings so he goes to harvest the ginseng his father planted around the old homestead decades before, ginseng that now belongs to the forest service. He doesn't quite measure up to his great aunt's old agedness.

I wasn't really interested in this one and wanted Jesse to just hurry up so I could get to the next story.

Return - 3 stars

Someone's coming home, walking through the snow, back from the military and probably a war. He remembers the death of his brother, Joel. It's snowing and he's just back from the Philippines, where it was always hot and muggy.

This is a super short story, but reflective and equal parts heavy and hopeful.

Waiting For the End of the World - 4.5 stars

Musings from a guy, Devon, playing music - usually Freebird (I hate that song) - in a cinderbox roadhouse sometime after midnight.

It's a bit funny, a bit resigned, and a bit horrible, what with the constant repetition of "Freebird" I really liked this one.

Burning Bright - 4 stars

Marcy's county in the middle of a drought and she thinks her young new husband, Carl, is out lighting fires in the park.

I don't know that I'd have been as Tammy Wynettey as Marcy but I enjoyed the layered unfolding of this story nonetheless.

The Woman Who Believed in Jaguars - 2.5 stars

Ruth saw a jaguar at the zoo as a kid and was impressed with how fluid it was. She forgets about them for half a century then she's thinking of them again. With no sense of belonging, she sets out to find if jaguars once inhabited the Carolinas.

This was the only story that didn't feel solid to me. Maybe that was intentional since Ruth's life isn't solid, she's not solid. She may as well be some vaporous being, as far as everyone else is concerned, according to her.

Where the Map Ends - 2 stars

2 fugitive slaves hide at a farm and talk to the farmer.

While I know this was a good story and I liked the possibly sinister denouement, I just didn't get caught up in this one like I had some of the others.

Those Who Are Dead Are Only Now Forgiven - 3 stars

The Shackelford house was haunted. It's out there rotting away on 30 acres and makes for the perfect meth house. Jody has to choose between his bright future and his former love.

This is one of the sad ones. I guess I should have guessed by the title.

Their Ancient, Glittering Eyes - 5 stars

Three old men, one of them a Rudicel (sp?), sit at the store, yammering about all the problems in the world, while people come tell them about a huge fish in a pool. They have to check it out for themselves and everyone's got an opinion.

This one took me by surprise because it's pretty funny. Of particular glee to me: one of the kids fish with a Panther Martin, my old favorite. This was my go-to back in the day:

And there's a fish whose mouth is full of hooks and lures, which is a terrifying image.

Bonus: I love all the voices the narrator uses.

Pretty much, I loved everything about this story.

Falling Star - I can't decide. I like and dislike it equally.

Bobby is beginning to get old and everything is leaving him behind - his wife is going to college, his daughter is in second grade and is gaining independence, his co-workers call him the old man and he knows he's got to keep up or he'll be fired. He just wants to feel relevant again.

I hated Bobby's thought process and so I hated Bobby but it was so realistic. Toxic masculinity is a hot topic right now and this touches on why some men can't get what they need out of life because the roles they thought they fit in don't exist anymore.

The Magic Bus - 3 stars

Sabre is nearly 16. The VietNam war is going on. She meets Wendy and Thomas, the hippies. Everyone in NC hates the hippies.

She feeds them in the barn, bringing them leftovers and talking to them or, rather, listening.

That ending. *The cow had left the spring trough and stood by the barn's ashes, waiting to be milked, not knowing where else to go.* It's pretty much perfect.

Something Rich and Strange - 4 stars

A Nebraskan family (probably some of my cousins) are in the Appalachians for Spring Break.

The girl wants to stand in the river so she can stand straddle a state line. The river takes her and she drowns in the undercut of a waterfall. The diver sent to retrieve her is haunted by the dead girl with her *flesh freed from the chandelier of bone.*

This one is full of emotions but not necessarily through a main character nor the ones you'd expect to find in a story about a guy trying to get to a dead child.

The Dowry - 3 stars

Pastor Boone goes off to see Ethan Burke (not this Ethan Burke), who fought for the Union and who wants to marry Confederate Col. Davidson's daughter. Poor old Col. (said sarcastically) won't let that damn Yank marry his daughter nor will he forgive the rest of the world unless he can have his hand back.

Ugh. This guy.

Another Civil War story and also one that is pretty good. Pastor Boone is a bit too literal in his religious beliefs, though.

A Sort of Miracle - 2 stars

Baroque and Marlboro? Are those their names? Anyhow, they're adult brothers living with their older sister and her husband, Denton, who hates the boys because they're fat, lazy, stupid slobs.

This story could be called Crazy Guy with Dumb & Dumber. I think it's supposed to be one of the fun and lighthearted ones, but it gave me an irritation ache.

The Corpse Bird - 3 stars

Boyd, an educated engineer, is worried someone is going to die because an owl has been sitting on the same branch in the same tree, hooting dolorously for a couple of nights. A third night of this behavior means someone is going to die.

We don't get to find out if that happens or not.

You can take the boy out of the mountains but you can't take the mountains out of the boy.

Dead Confederates - 3 stars

Wesley's a fat, lazy, alt-right loser who wants to go graverobbing for Civil War belt buckles, buttons, and the like.

It doesn't work.

This is light-hearted and humorous, like the dumb and dumber one only with that excellent sense of comeuppance at the end.

The Woman at the Pond - 3 stars

A guy asks Wallace Rudicel (sp?) to help him drain a pond. This Rudicel is also concerned about fishing lures.

The guy remembers back in his high school days, he was out on the pond fishing one evening when he saw a domestic dispute and a truck sped off, leaving a woman in a leather jacket behind.

(view spoiler)

I wanted my question answered for this one. I wasn't happy to have an up-for-discussion ending. I often like those just fine but not this time.

A Servant of History - 2 stars

Ha! The narrator is using an English accent for the main character (because he's British) and it is so weird.

In 1922, James Wilson, a British guy has been sent on a ballad-finding quest, trying to find old English songs that made it across the pond.

Wilson, in his arrogance, makes all the worst decisions and has a run-in with an old grudge.

Another humorous one but it did not tickle my funny bone nor did it delight my sense of schadenfreude like I had hoped it would.

26 Days - 3 stars

Some guy works at the college and his wife, Ellen, works at the diner. They have a daughter who is in Afghanistan. The couple is working so hard to get their daughter into college when she comes home, they're so supportive. They're also terrified she won't make it home now that she's due back soon and that's how superstition works.

Another short, quiet, reflective story, this one full of parental love and fear. I liked it.

Last Rite - 2 stars

Segues from the last story with the sheriff with his hat in his hand come to tell Sarah Hampton that her son, Elijah, is dead. He'd been shot on a trail and robbed.

She's a little upset that Elijah's wife, Laura, 17-years-old and who had only been married to Elijah a year before he had been killed, is already planning to remarry.

Sarah and Laura go with a surveyor to see where Elijah had died so she can record it in the family bible.

I'm had hard time concentrating on this one, I'm not sure why.

Blackberries in June - 5 stars

This one was my favorite and it made me so angry.

Jamie and Matt. They've been married about a year and have already bought a little lake house, which they're fixing up together. Matt is a logger and Jamie is worried about him because it's a dangerous job.

They plan to take night classes to get degrees and better jobs. They're doing everything they can to get ahead

and be comfortable.

Matt works for Jamie's brother, Charlton, who is married to Linda, an annoying twit. For some reason, Linda and Jamie's/Charlton's mom think Matt and Jamie should be thankful for Charlton's kindness, as if Matt isn't a good worker, as if Jamie and Matt don't deserve what they have but, rather, owe their good fortune to Jamie's brother. They're also snipey about all the work Matt and Jamie are doing on the house and how they need to go to church, instead. You know, to express their gratitude for all the good stuff they have.

(view spoiler)Jamie sees in Linda and in her mother that thing that runs through women in this family, how everything is always bad, how they sour so young and turn into human-shaped bitterness and resentment. Jamie's mom agrees that Jamie and Matt owe the family their help and money because the mom feels this is what just has to be done. They'll have to sell the house because they have no right to it anyway and they should thank their lucky stars they had such success so early in life.

It ends (view spoiler)

My review:

Fuck you, Linda. And fuck you, too, Jamie's mom. And you can just step off, while we're at it, grammaw. Stop perpetuating the cycle, you miserable little goblins.

Chemistry - 4 stars

Paul, Joel's dad, has returned from the hospital and won't take his pills. He'd been on shock therapy. He is a chemistry teacher and feels the pills will make him incapable but, as a result, he was found sobbing in a closet at work and then decided he wasn't Presbyterian anymore but was going to attend a Pentecostal church, instead. He also engages in a new/old hobby at the uncle's lake house.

Poor Joel. There was nothing he could have done differently. Again, you can take the man out of the mountains but you can not take the mountains out of the man.

The Night the New Jesus Fell to Earth - 4 stars

Larry Rudicel (sp?) is a used car huckster and this is told by Larry's ex-wife. Larry, comes up with the great idea to do an Easter display in front of the church. He and Terry are going to be on the crosses. Harry might be Jesus. Larry, Terry, and Harry.

The narrator is a carpenter, and a good one. She was supposed to build the 3 crosses for the Easter display but because Larry was being an ass, she left and they had to do it themselves. They half-assed it, of course. This reads as an op-ed piece in the paper.

While the light, humorous ones have not been my favorite, this story definitely appealed to my smirky big sister personality. All the comeuppances!

The Harvest - 3 stars

A 10-year-old helps his father and uncle harvest the rest of a neighbor's cabbages after the neighbor died tipping his tractor.

Super short, sad, and a good lesson for a growing boy.

Badeye - 5 stars

Badeye is the local creepy Sno-Cone seller. He used to be a bootlegger and the religious women in the neighborhood find him and his sinning ways distasteful. The men of town are more sympathetic but the kids follow him around like he's the Pied Piper.

So this kid's mom made up a story about a horrible, paralyzing disease spread by flies via Sno-Cones to scare her kid into not chasing after Badeye.

It didn't work.

The mothers got together and came up with a new strategy: Bring in the law.

It didn't work.

They tried homemade SnoCones. No dice.

This is a little like "A Christmas Story" in tone.

Anyway, the kid and his father bond over snakes - Chris (my brother) would like this story - so his mother is distraught no matter what due to all the dangerous things in the forms snakes or Badeye.

But then all the problems solve themselves and the mother can finally get a good night's rest.

Seriously, this was like a story my brother would tell. Or, rather, a story I would tell about my brother and that made me love it even more than I'd already loved it. It has a sad ending, though.

Love and Pain in the New South - 2 stars

Darlene is back after 2 months with divorce papers. The soon-to-be-ex-husband is sorry for what has happened because he loves her and he's sorry he killed the monkey and, as a result of that deed, Darlene is with a moron named Stanley who is both a veterinarian and psychologist.

This one also doesn't have the answers I was looking for. What really happened at the end? Also, these loser dudes who expect their wives to put up with their shit and be happy about it are not good at figuring stuff out.

Shiloh - 2 stars

In another Civil War story, Benjamin has been injured in a big battle (see title). He's walking home to his wife, Emma, who can grow anything. He wishes he'd brought her some peach pits to plant.

This one threw me because I didn't know this author did ghosts stories.

Outlaws - 4 stars

The narrator used to rob trains for tourists as a teen. In between robbings, he'd listen to the college kids talk about keeping out of the VietNam war.

This one seems autobiographical. I imagined he was in the LoDo Tattered Cover during the Denver part. Whatever the case, this was the perfect story to end the collection.

Kiwi Begs2Differ \ says

This book contains a large number of already published material, so the reader who is already familiar with Rash's works and has read his previous story collections *Burning Bright* and *Nothing Gold Can Stay: Stories* will find many favourites here. For a newbie it would be an excellent introduction to a master storyteller.

Rating of the ones new to me:

Where the maps end 3.5 stars

Those who are dead are only now forgiven 3 stars

Their ancient glittering eyes 3.5 stars

The magic bus 3.5 star

Something rich and strange 2 stars

A sort of miracle 3 stars
The woman at the pond 2.5 stars
A servant of history 4 stars
Twenty-six days 3.5 stars
Last rite 5 stars
Blackberries in June 4.5 stars
Chemistry 3 stars
The night the new Jesus fell to Earth 3.5 stars
The harvest 2.5 stars
Badeye 3 stars
Love and pain in the new south 3 stars
Shiloh 3.5 stars
Outlaws 2.5 stars

sappho_reader says

Spectacular. *Something Rich and Strange* is Ron Rash's latest collection of short stories. He expertly captures the hardscrabble life and physical landscape of North Carolina, often in the region of Boone. Each story is unique, poignant and never ordinary. These vignettes of ordinary people living on the cusp of folklore and modernity have captured my heart and imagination.

Most of these stories aren't new; I've already read many in *Nothing Gold Can Stay*, but I have found that they stick with me long afterwards I'm done reading. While reading this particular collection several themes resonated deeply with me: stories set during the Civil War with the beautiful yet savage imagery ("Lincolmites", "Where the Map Ends", "The Dowry"); stories which portray the horrors of Methamphetamines ("The Ascent", "Back of Beyond", "Those Who Are Dead Are Only Now Forgiven"); and stories that reveal how one decision can have devastating effects ("Night Hawks", "Into the Gorge", "Falling Star").

My favorite story from Rash continues to be "The Trusty" about the escape of a chain gang prisoner. The ambiguous ending continues to haunt me today.

I've read a couple of Rash's novels, but I prefer his short stories where I believe he really shines.

Judi says

This is my first exposure to Ron Rash's writing. He may end up being one of my favorite authors. I am a fan of well done short stories and he certainly has the gift. I can relate to the time lines of many of these stories and the ambiance of the small town South. My Dad's family is from rural Tennessee. I found this collection of Ron Rash's work engaging. I have his novel "One Foot In Eden" up as my next read.
