




We Were Flying to Chicago

Kevin Clouther

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"Kevin Clouther's collection of wry, funny, big-hearted stories is utterly satisfying and unexpected, like scratching an itch you didn't know you had."—**Rebecca Johns**

"Kevin Clouther's remarkable collection illustrates, page by page, the unique joys of reading short fiction. By turns subversive and poignant, darkly humorous and deeply moving, these ten stories show us the author's expansive range and the heart that drives his imagination. Clouther's beautifully rendered characters will stay with you long after you've finished the book—you'll see them on the street, in the office, in your mirror. "—**Bret Anthony Johnston**

"The 10 entries in Clouther's debut collection all display a sure-handed grasp of craft. The first and last stories are the best. In the former, the title story, deft and subtle shifts of perspective among a group of young women lead to a well-earned concluding insight. Better still is the emotionally complex final selection, "Puritan Hotel, Barnstable," about two brothers, Michael and Connor, dealing with Connor's cancer treatment."— *Publishers Weekly*

The phone rang. I picked it up, and the voice roared into my right ear. I said, What do you want? What do you want? I said this five, six, seven times, and then I hung up the telephone. It didn't ring again, which made me irrationally proud. This ended up depressing me. Nervously, I looked for something to pick up and then drop. I picked up an empty coffee mug, but it felt too light. This wasn't my desk. This wasn't even my building.

In this striking debut collection, characters find unexpected moments of profound insight while navigating the monotony of daily life. Here we find a man who drives to the wrong mountain, a hubcap cleaner who moonlights as a karaoke star, and a deliveryman whose urgent letters have no willing recipient. While lulled by the deceptively simple rhythm of the ordinary, Kevin Clouther offers the instant before momentous change—the view over the cliff, the intake of breath before a decision, a glimpse of stark vulnerability, of faith and hope.

Kevin Clouther was born in Boston, Massachusetts, and grew up on Cape Cod and in south Florida. He holds degrees from the University of Virginia and Iowa Writers' Workshop, where he completed his thesis under Marilynne Robinson. He teaches creative writing at Stony Brook University, where he coordinates the program in writing and reading series, and at Johns Hopkins. He lives in Floral Park, New York.

We Were Flying to Chicago Details

Date : Published May 13th 2014 by Black Balloon Publishing (first published April 21st 2014)

ISBN : 9781936787159

Author : Kevin Clouther

Format : Paperback 208 pages

Genre : Short Stories, Fiction

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From Reader Review We Were Flying to Chicago for online ebook

Mindy says

Not really a book for my taste, but others might think differently. I did particularly like the two stories "The Third Prophet of Wyaconda" and "Puritan Hotel, Barnstable". Clouther deals in an interesting and sensitive way with religious issues, particularly Catholicism, and illness/death.

Clifford says

I might not have heard of this collection of stories except I'm going to be on a panel with Kevin Clouther and another author (Craig Bernier) at the Virginia Festival of the Book in a few weeks. Unless I'm moderating a panel like this, I rarely have the time to read the other panelists' books ahead of time, but because I have no moderating chores at this year's festival, I decided I would read these two books.

See my full review here: [review of We Were Flying to Chicago](#)

Judy Mann says

This guy could be an excellent writer. Several of these stories were real show stoppers. His writing is explicit and strong. So why does he hide behind these wierdo up in the air bullshit endings? Everything has a beginning, a middle and an end. Except short stories that are trying too hard to be profound. Like the little engine that could. Quit trying so hard and you'll be a real show stopper. I promise you that. JM

TinHouseBooks says

Thomas Ross (Editorial Assistant): This week, intimidated by the stack of unread books at my bedside (fine: spilling onto my bed), I bummed around the internet, stocking a hypothetical anthology of online fiction. I was taken by Daniel Kowalski's post-apocalyptic-O-Henry story "Our Meat" in Electric Literature's Recommended Reading series, in which Kowalski cutely subverts the common trope of the mysterious cataclysmic event by calling it "The Thing That Happened." Another favorite was a Kevin Clouther story from his collection We Were Flying to Chicago, on Black Balloon's blog, The Airship. The story, "On the Highway Near Fairfield, Connecticut," is a strange, moving (and stopping) story that superimposes one moment over another unexpectedly. It's hard to explain, even to myself, but that it can be so inexplicable and stay so grounded in the mundane is part of its odd charm.

Marvin says

A collection of solid stories. Hits its highest points in "On the Highway Near Fairfield, Connecticut" and

"Puritan Hotel, Barnstable," when the present moment gives rise to the past--the stories feel vibrant, resonant. At its weakest--"I Know Who You Are," "Open House"--that emotional core is missing, or partly missing, the characters lacking some connection to their world. Other highlights: "T-Bone Capone Loves the Lady Ace" and "Isabelle And Colleen."

Michael Van Kerckhove says

Catching up on some 2015 reads...

Impulse purchase at UnAbridged Bookstore in Chicago. My professor Rebecca Johns blurbed it. Favorites include "On the Highway Near Fairfield, Connecticut" and "Charleston for Breakfast."

Joe Labriola says

With clear thematic intent and poignant narration throughout, Kevin Clouther's "We Were Flying to Chicago" is a swift - and thought-provoking - short story collection, enlightening its readers by exploring its relatable characters' deepest needs, desires, and dreams.

Michele says

It was a mix of great and frustrating. I truly was amazed by the writing at times and wanted to skip one story entirely. Obviously a talented writer and I will read more of his work.

Angie Butcher says

Ok - these stories were so diverse. Some were very thought provoking, some were frustrating, some were so symbolic I could not understand them one bit. And a few were slightly disturbing. Overall I did read the whole book and often found myself thinking about the issues presented.

Megan Rowe says

<http://heavyfeatherreview.com/2014/12...>

Ericka Clouther says

Not a real review because I'm a little biased (best short story collection EVER) but more of a quick summary:

The title story could easily be the anthem of our generation.

The Prophet of Wyaconda is my new favorite short story of all time. Absolutely everyone who has read Isabelle and Colleen loves it. Charleston for Breakfast really reminds me of our time in the Shenandoah Valley and the angst of being in my twenties though I did not experience those two things simultaneously, I can now imagine what that would be like.

If you're not a big reader, I suggest you read Isabelle and Colleen first, and then Charleston for Breakfast, and then T-Bone Capone, as these are probably the most accessible ones.

David says

A frustrating collection. Clouter's stories are, at their best, brilliant - four stories here would individually merit five stars - but a few of the stories simply don't work and left me baffled as to what he was trying to achieve.

Sami Wax says

I loved this collection of short stories so much! Kevin Clouter curated these stories together and put them in the perfect order to read. They may not be sequential or have anything to do with each other, but each stories theme plays so well into the next one. My favorite was probably Puritan Hotel, Boston.

Mahala Church says

Received as a Good Reads giveaway, Kevin Couther's book of short stories was a good reprieve from the usual short story collection. His eclectic choice of stories are everything but boring. A look into the lives of a diversity of characters that reach across age and economic spectrums, the stories are introspective in many good ways. Clouter's ability to tap into the variety of lifestyles and ages, as well as the pain and happiness of his characters, the varied settings is evidence to his creativity, imagination, and skill as a writer.

Sonia says

All of the stories felt like reading brief glimpses of personal diaries. Interesting but not complete. Left a lot of space to ponder.

Michaela says

The first three stories were good in that monkey-mind stream of consciousness humans have. I didn't really buy into the characters as the stories progressed beginning with Puritan Hotel, Boston and it was downhill from there for me.

Jeanette says

I'm sort of a target reader - lapsed Catholic who grew up in South Florida and loves literary fiction - so it makes sense that I would love it. But beyond demographics, the stories were assured and often had a subtle sense of romantic wistfulness that kept me on edge, constantly wondering what would happen to these characters. And I always felt satisfied even when heartbreaking reality won out.

Pat Rosenberg says

excellent short stories. Read each story carefully and think about it. These aren't short stories to be read quickly these stories are to be savored.

Leia Teague says

The stories in this book are thought provoking and very enjoyable. I really enjoyed reading this book. It is different than most short story books in that Kevin's characters are just like us. They are well developed and "human".

Stefani says

In each of Clouther's short stories, the characters are on a journey, one that may not seem important at first glance, but a small incident changes the perspectives of the characters. He shows how one little thing--a swerve, a sunrise, a comment, or even a lack of event--can create a trigger and revelation within a character about the world around them and themselves. Smart, well written, and grabs you from the first story until the end.
