



## The Wall of America

*Thomas M. Disch*

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## **The Wall of America** Thomas M. Disch

Surreal and satiric, this collection of short fiction pays a mesmerizing visit to the shadowy zone that lies between present everyday life and a perilous near future that is frighteningly tangible.

In "The Wall of America," the Department of Homeland Security has put up a border wall between the U.S. and Canada, but the NEA has plans to turn it into the world's largest art gallery. After the Rapture, working-class life for "A Family of the Post-Apocalypse" is not as different as one might imagine, despite the occasional plague of biker-gang locusts. Between addiction and art is "Ringtime," where a criminal is trapped in a recursive compulsion to visit other people's memories while he is forced to record his own for an eager audience. A Somali schoolgirl living in post-WWIII Minneapolis goes on a bloody crusade to rid her town of a familiar predator, one who might just be a monster, in "White Man."

Vivid, starkly imagined, and strikingly articulate, this disquieting compilation is a journey that skillfully straddles the line between absurdity and irony.

## **The Wall of America Details**

Date : Published October 1st 2008 by Tachyon Publications

ISBN : 9781892391827

Author : Thomas M. Disch

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Genre : Short Stories, Science Fiction, Horror, Fiction, Fantasy

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## From Reader Review *The Wall of America* for online ebook

### Jonathan says

Thomas M. Disch is now my homeboy.

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### Corey says

"There is likely no better introduction to the vastness of his talent than his posthumously-released short story collection *The Wall of America*. The collection truly captures his range as a writer."

Read the full review [here](#).

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### Eric says

A strong collection. Disch's interest in the visual arts comes through in a number of these short stories, including the title story. In one story a bus load of art critics gets slaughtered. Knowing that he killed himself a few years ago might make one pass over the humor found in many of these stories, but it is a key ingredient. There is a very palpable sense of sadness and loneliness present behind the scenes though.

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### Cat Rambo says

This is a wonderfully fine book of short stories. Disch was a master of the form, and some of these pieces are wonderful, as well as unexpectedly humorous at times.

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### Rand says

Cynically sublime and succinct. Disch was a master of grammar and the possibilities inherent in a phrase.

A few are a little hokey, but that is to be expected from the author of *The Brave Little Toaster*.

And every GoodRead junkie who has ever tried to "win" a review copy would do well to acquaint themselves with *The Man Who Read A Book*.

I first acquired this book near the beginnings of my time on this website and pointedly chose to not review it here. It is possible I did not finish reading all of the stories. As I am nearly done with it now, some five years after the point of purchase, most, if not all, of the stories therein are familiar to me. At the time I was still dubious as to the worth of keeping any sort of personal record in a database such as GoodReads but I am now pleased to know that my errant thoughts are logged in for future reference—as pompous as that may sound, there it is.

Recently someone I know saw me reading this on the short brick wall outside of our place of work. My mind was more focused on the time and the heat of the sun than my observer, so, when asked what I was reading, all I could do was display the front cover and hold my breath. Pretty sure the observer thought I was reading something related to the current US president's dismal foreign policy promises . . .

My aunt had the privilege of meeting Mr. Disch once, back in the late 70s / early 80s. She said he was nice, if a little peculiar. But who isn't?

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## **R. says**

Ordered from Powell's Books.

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Thomas Disch committed suicide on July 4: [http://locusmag.com/2008/Disch\\_Obit.html](http://locusmag.com/2008/Disch_Obit.html)

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## **William Freedman says**

I was unaware of Tom Disch before ReaderCon 2010, when Konrad Walewski introduced me to his works.

Unaware, but apparently nobody is unfamiliar. It's hard to believe this rebellious, gun-toting, gay-liberating, tattooed outlaw is the same guy who wrote *The Brave Little Toaster* and the original treatment for *The Lion King*.

This collection of his work shows his diversity, which is another way of saying it's uneven. Through the first three or four stories I wondered, "What's the big deal about this guy?" But as I stuck with it, I'm glad I did. "Canned Goods" was essentially a one-liner joke, but a funny one and it encouraged me to keep reading. "Bunny Steiner," "Voices of the Kill," "In Xanadu" and others were wildly entertaining.

He pushed a couple of my "fail" buttons, though: "Torah! Torah! Torah!" got much of the book of Genesis factually wrong, conflating the story of Abraham and Sarah with that of Jacob, Rachel and Leah. (Disch went to Catholic school. No excuses!) And some of his stories, "Bunny Steiner," "Man Who Read a Book" and "Slaughter Rock," were riffs on the business of being a writer or a creative artist based in New York -- which always struck me as lazy and self-indulgent material.

But overall, I'm very much impressed by this writer who was as once prolific and silenced too soon. But Disch would've been comfortable with that contradiction. It certainly wasn't his most jarring.

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## **Yama Rahyar says**

Short, dark comedies with a single theme: When most everything is a scam, most art is, too.

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## Stacey says

As with most short story collections, some of the stories are so-so and some are truly wonderful. My favorite was 'The Man Who Read a Book.' I laughed through the entire thing.

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## Rick says

Disch wrote "The Brave Little Toaster," before his writing got darker. These stories are like PCP-laced pop tarts.

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## Ralph Palm says

If you like Phillip K. Dick, you'll love Thomas Disch. The ideas are just as weird, but the prose is more coherent. And funny! But also sad. It's all a rich tapestry.

To give you an idea of his range, I will just mention that Disch wrote both a book called 'The Genocides' as well as one called 'The Brave Little Toaster' (yes, Disney made a movie version you ;ay vaguely remember). In between there was some (good) poetry and award winning literary criticism. Maybe even an opera--it's hard to keep track of everything, really.

This particular book is a posthumous collection of his late-in-life short stories. Titles include:

- 'The White Man' (about vampires)
- 'In Praise of Older Women' (depicting a conversation between Oedipus and Jocasta)
- 'Painting Eggplants' (which is not a metaphor or allegory. It is \*literally\* a compelling story about a man who paints paintings of eggplants. 'How is this possible?')
- The Man Who Read a Book (!)
- The First Annual Performance Art Festival at the Slaughter Rock Battlefield (I desperately want to talk about this one, but mentioning any details would give too much away.)

I would write more about Disch, but as usual when finishing a book, I've stayed up past my bedtime.

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