



Autobiography of Red

By Anne Carson

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Autobiography of Red By Anne Carson

The award-winning poet reinvents a genre in a stunning work that is both a novel and a poem, both an unconventional re-creation of an ancient Greek myth and a wholly original coming-of-age story set in the present.

Geryon, a young boy who is also a winged red monster, reveals the volcanic terrain of his fragile, tormented soul in an autobiography he begins at the age of five. As he grows older, Geryon escapes his abusive brother and affectionate but ineffectual mother, finding solace behind the lens of his camera and in the arms of a young man named Herakles, a cavalier drifter who leaves him at the peak of infatuation. When Herakles reappears years later, Geryon confronts again the pain of his desire and embarks on a journey that will unleash his creative imagination to its fullest extent. By turns whimsical and haunting, erudite and accessible, richly layered and deceptively simple, *Autobiography of Red* is a profoundly moving portrait of an artist coming to terms with the fantastic accident of who he is.

A NEW YORK TIMES NOTABLE BOOK OF THE YEAR

National Book Critics Circle Award Finalist

"Anne Carson is, for me, the most exciting poet writing in English today." -- Michael Ondaatje

"This book is amazing--I haven't discovered any writing in years so marvelously disturbing." --Alice Munro

"A profound love story . . . sensuous and funny, poignant, musical and tender." -- The New York Times Book Review

"A deeply odd and immensely engaging book. . . . [Carson] exposes with passionate force the mythic underlying the explosive everyday." --The Village Voice

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Anne Carson's *Autobiography of Red* is a novel in verse, the author's first. A classicist by profession as well as a poet, Carson has drawn on antiquity for her cast, updating the myth of Geryon and Herakles. In the original version, of course, Herakles killed the red-skinned, winged Geryon. In Carson's very contemporary retelling, he merely inspires, but does not return, the monster's passion. By choosing Geryon as her central character, Carson can bring up the questions of existence as if they hadn't been asked before. After all, the monster's instincts have not been numbed by civilization. Fires twist through him. We feel the pain of learning the most elementary things, and then the volcanic intensity that comes with that more advanced thing, love. Yet Carson doesn't so much tell the story of Geryon's love as mediate his very being through semiological surfaces: cafes, video stores, lipstick, a library where he shelves government documents with a "forlorn austerity, / tall and hushed in their ranges as veterans of a forgotten war." Carson seldom satisfies herself with an image of the world. Instead she atomizes the world, leaving it broken down, refracted, and glinting. At times her verbal pyrotechnics manage to render pure *energy*:

A little button at the end of each range activated the fluorescent track above it.
A yellowing 5 x 7 index card
Scotch-taped below each button said EXTINGUISH LIGHT WHEN NOT IN USE.
Geryon went flickering
through the ranges like a bit of mercury flipping the switches on and off.
The librarians thought him
a talented boy with a shadow side.

No novelist could have gotten away with that last line. Yet it's very much to the point: Carson's Geryon is, among other things, a camera freak who doesn't understand that an observer must inevitably alter the nature of the thing observed. Here is Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, cheek-by-jowl with the ancients! And indeed, Carson's achievement is to interweave the archaic and the modern so seamlessly that by the time we finish reading *Autobiography of Red*, the entire landscape looks inside out. --Mark Rudman

From Library Journal

Is it poetry? Is it a novel in verse? A fable? A myth? However you define Carson's distinctive and wildly inventive new work, it is riveting reading. At the center of the narrative is a winged red monster named Geryon; throughout, we see him struggling with his family, falling for the indifferent Herakles, and discovering photography as a means of comfort and escape. Wistful yet whimsical, offhand yet intense, funky yet erudite (Carson, a classics professor at McGill, grounds this work in ancient Greek myth), this is a reading experience like no other.

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From [Booklist](#)

The title says *autobiography*; the subtitle, *novel*; and an inner title page reads "A Romance." Go with the last, for Carson recasts the Greek legend of Geryon, the red, winged monster that Herakles killed during his tenth labor. Names, wings, and some mythical details remain, but the setting is contemporary. Geryon, 14, meets Herakles, 16, and it's love at first sight. Life separates them, but they meet again when Geryon, now 22, literally runs into Herakles in Buenos Aires. Herakles and a colleague (and lover), scouting volcanoes for a film, whisk Geryon to the Andes, where his wings may cause him to be taken for an immortal. There the story breaks off. The start of another fantasy trilogy? Hardly, for although we know the story's end, it is not in the source, an ancient poem that now exists only in fragments. Instead, Carson interviews the poet, Stesichoros (circa 630[^]-555 B.C.), about his vision (he may have been blinded by Helen of Troy).

Narratively, philosophically, humorously, a dazzling performance. Oh, yes: it's a poem. *Ray Olson*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jesse Williams:

Nowadays reading books be than want or need but also become a life style. This reading addiction give you lot of advantages. Advantages you got of course the knowledge the rest of the information inside the book which improve your knowledge and information. The data you get based on what kind of e-book you read, if you want send more knowledge just go with education and learning books but if you want sense happy read one together with theme for entertaining like comic or novel. The particular Autobiography of Red is kind of book which is giving the reader unpredictable experience.

Michael Bennett:

Playing with family inside a park, coming to see the water world or hanging out with pals is thing that usually you might have done when you have spare time, in that case why you don't try factor that really opposite from that. One activity that make you not sense tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition of information. Even you love Autobiography of Red, it is possible to enjoy both. It is good combination right, you still need to miss it? What kind of hangout type is it? Oh come on its mind hangout people. What? Still don't get it, oh come on its called reading friends.

Lillie Moreland:

Do you have something that you enjoy such as book? The book lovers usually prefer to pick book like comic, short story and the biggest an example may be novel. Now, why not attempting Autobiography of Red that give your pleasure preference will be satisfied by simply reading this book. Reading habit all over the world can be said as the opportunity for people to know world much better then how they react in the direction of the world. It can't be explained constantly that reading routine only for the geeky man or woman but for all of you who wants to possibly be success person. So , for every you who want to start examining as your good habit, you may pick Autobiography of Red become your personal starter.

Eldon Hall:

Within this era which is the greater person or who has ability in doing something more are more precious than other. Do you want to become one of it? It is just simple way to have that. What you should do is just spending your time little but quite enough to enjoy a look at some books. On the list of books in the top collection in your reading list is usually Autobiography of Red. This book which can be qualified as The Hungry Slopes can get you closer in growing to be precious person. By looking up and review this e-book you can get many advantages.

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