



Granta 81: Best of Young British Novelists, 2003

From Brand: Grove Press, *Granta*



Granta 81: Best of Young British Novelists, 2003 From Brand: Grove Press, Granta

In 1983 Granta magazine set out to identify the 20 best novelists under 40 in Britain. This list included Martin Amis, Julian Barnes, Ian McEwan, and Salman Rushdie. In 1993 Granta chose again, and among the selected works presented were those by Kazuo Ishiguro, Jeanette Winterson, and Hanif Kureishi. In 1995 Granta published its Best of Young American Novelists issue — including Jonathan Franzen long before he penned *The Corrections*, Lorrie Moore before *Birds of America* had taken off, as well as other now well-known names like Edwidge Danticat and Jeffrey Eugenides. Contributors to the first two volumes in the series included six Booker Award winners and nine recipients of the Whitbread Award. Now, Granta is poised to present the best of young British novelists for the third time. Guaranteed to provide scintillating reading, this issue features new work by the 20 selected young writers, giving the clearest picture yet of an exciting new generation.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Much of *Granta*'s success as the Anglo-American fiction and journalism magazine of choice rests upon its *Best of Young British Novelists* issues, which appear every 10 years and feature an editorial board's selection of 20 British fiction writers under the age of 40. The first two issues, published in 1983 and 1993, included the likes of Julian Barnes, Salman Rushdie, Pat Barker, Martin Amis, Jeanette Winterson, Will Self, and Ian McEwan, and these anthologies have become a passport to success for young British authors. Whether the 2003 issue will prove as prophetic as its predecessors remains to be seen. It includes some wonderful writing--Ben Rice's story of marital crises among Koi fanciers, "Look at Me, I'm Beautiful!" is particularly memorable--and some uneven ventures, such as A.L. Kennedy's "Room 506," a novel excerpt narrated by a chronic amnesiac, and Hari Kunzru's "Lila.exe," an account of the development of a Bollywood-inspired computer virus.

Regular *Granta* readers will recognize a number of the featured writers, including contributing editor Andrew O'Hagan. Most of these authors have yet to attain worldwide fame, although the ubiquitous Zadie Smith is represented with an excellent short story. The scope of the issue generally lies within *Granta*'s house style--well-written, somewhat conservative realist fiction--although there are a few excursions into weirder territory, such as Toby Litt's baroque essay-story, "The Hare," and Robert McLiam Wilson's magic realist "The Dreamed," in which war dead are rematerialized and resurrected in the bed of an aging English man.

The practice of showcasing novelists through a selection of short stories, novel excerpts, and works-in-progress is obviously a compromise, as only those writers who are particularly skilled at short fiction will be seen at their best. Teasers are never as satisfying as completed works, and a few contributors--such as Sarah Waters and Alan Warner--don't come off as well as they might, simply because their excerpts cry out for context. Anyone who is particularly interested in new British fiction would do well to regard this issue as a reading list, not a representative anthology, even though a number of delights are to be found within. --Jack Illingworth, *Amazon.ca*

Review

"A list that sets the literary agenda for a generation." -- *The Observer*

"*Granta* has found a way to diffuse star power to the benefit of writers and readers alike." -- *Time Out New York*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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Mary West:

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Edward Trotta:

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