



4-1-2013

The Road, by Cormac McCarthy, Vintage, 2007

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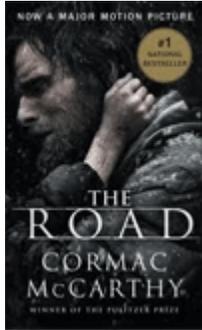
Johnston, Bill, "*The Road*, by Cormac McCarthy, Vintage, 2007" (2013). *LAS Faculty Book Reviews*. 138.
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Recommended Readings



The Road

by Cormac McCarthy, Vintage, 2007

Reviewed by William Johnston

You can enjoy reading McCarthy's Pulitzer Prize Winner literally, as a powerful tale of a dying father's loving care for his ten year-old son as they journey determinedly through an unfamiliar post-apocalyptic physical world - filled with dust, ashes, cruelty, and gritty fog - toward a coastal region in hopes of life renewed. Most people read it this way. You can also read it metaphorically, where that desolation is a spiritual wilderness and may now seem familiar: where is God in this wasteland? As McCarthy describes, the father awakes one morning, raises his face to a paling day, and whispers in prayer, "Are you there? Will I see you at the last? Have you a neck by which to throttle you? Have you a heart? Damn you eternally have you a soul? Oh God. Oh God."

Has your life ever traveled through wilderness? (Resulting from your own doubt? Or from others' cruelty or life's spears?) Can you handle this story's bleakness? Would you value the insights the metaphorical reading conveys? Can you hope that something better might finally be ahead in that coastal region (even as nothing indicates survival is worthwhile)? Then get this book. Take the journey with strong heart. God is indeed there, but only as we love. And hope...patiently.

- William Johnston is professor of mathematics at Butler University.