Where Is Everyone?

Raymond Carver

I've seen some things. I was going over to my mother's to stay a few nights, but just as I came to the top of the stairs I looked and she was on the sofa kissing a man. It was summer, the door was open, and the color TV was playing.

My mother is sixty-five and lonely. She belongs to a singles club. But even so, knowing all this, it was hard. I stood at the top of the stairs with my hand on the railing and watched as the man pulled her deeper into the kiss. She was kissing back, and the TV was going on the other side of the room. It was Sunday, about five in the afternoon. People from the apartment house were down below in the pool. I went back down the stairs and out to my car.

A lot has happened since that afternoon, and on the whole things are better now. But during those days, when my mother was putting out to men she'd just met, I was out of work, drinking, and crazy. My kids were crazy, and my wife was crazy and having a "thing" with an unemployed aerospace engineer she'd met at AA. He was crazy too. His name was Ross and he had five or six kids. He walked with a limp from a gunshot wound his first wife had given him. He didn't have a wife now; he wanted my wife. I don't know what we were all thinking of in those days. The second wife had come and gone, but it was his first wife who had shot him in the thigh some years back, giving him the limp, and who now had him in and out of court, or in jail, every six months or so for not meeting his support payments. I wish him well now. But it was different then. More than once in those days I mentioned weapons. I'd say to my wife, I'd shout it, "I'm going to kill him!" But nothing ever happened. Things lurched on. I never met the man, though we talked on the phone a few times. I did find a couple of pictures of him once

when I was going through my wife's purse. He was a little guy, not too little, and he had a mustache and was wearing a striped jersey, waiting for a kid to come down the slide. In the other picture he was standing against a house—my house? I couldn't tell—with his arms crossed, dressed up, wearing a tie. Ross, you son of a bitch, I hope you're O.K. now. I hope things are better for you too.

The last time he'd been jailed, a month before that Sunday, I found out from my daughter that her mother had gone bail for him. Daughter Kate, who was fifteen, didn't take to this any better than I did. It wasn't that she had any loyalty to me in this—she had no loyalties to me or her mother in anything and was only too willing to sell either one of us down the river. No, it was that there was a serious cash-flow problem in the house and if money went to Ross, there'd be that much less for what she needed. So Ross was on her list now. Also, she didn't like his kids, she'd said, but she'd told me once before that in general Ross was all right, even funny and interesting when he wasn't drinking. He'd even told her fortune.

He spent his time repairing things, now that he could no longer hold a job in the aerospace industry. But I'd seen his house from the outside; and the place looked like a dumping ground, with all kinds and makes of old appliances and equipment that would never wash or cook or play again—all of it just standing in his open garage and on his drive and in the front yard. He also kept some broken-down cars around that he liked to tinker on. In the first stages of their affair my wife had told me he "collected antique cars." Those were her words. I'd seen some of his cars parked in front of his house when I'd driven by there trying to see what I could see. Old 1950's and 1960's, dented cars with torn seat covers. They were junkers, that's all. I knew. I had his number. We had things in common, more than just driving old cars and trying to hold on for dear life to the same woman. Still, handyman or not, he couldn't manage to tune my wife's car properly or fix our TV set when it broke down and we lost the picture. We had volume, but no picture. If we wanted to get the news, we'd have to sit around the screen at night and listen to the set. I'd drink and make some crack to my kids about Mr. Fixit. Even now I don't know if my wife believed that stuff or not, about antique cars and such. But she cared for him, she loved him even; that's pretty clear now.

They'd met when Cynthia was trying to stay sober and was going to meetings three or four times a week. I had been in and out of AA for several months, though when Cynthia met Ross I was out and drinking a fifth a day of anything I could get my hands on. But as I heard Cynthia

say to someone over the phone about me, I'd had the exposure to AA and knew where to go when I really wanted help. Ross had been in AA and then had gone back to drinking again. Cynthia felt, I think, that maybe there was more hope for him than for me and tried to help him and so went to the meetings to keep herself sober, then went over to cook for him or clean his house. His kids were no help to him in this regard. Nobody lifted a hand around his house except Cynthia when she was there. But the less his kids pitched in, the more he loved them. It was strange. It was the opposite with me. I hated my kids during this time. I'd be on the sofa with a glass of vodka and grapefruit juice when one of them would come in from school and slam the door. One afternoon I screamed and got into a scuffle with my son. Cynthia had to break it up when I threatened to knock him to pieces. I said I would kill him. I said, "I gave you life and I can take it away."

Madness.

The kids, Katy and Mike, were only too happy to take advantage of this crumbling situation. They seemed to thrive on the threats and bullying they inflicted on each other and on us—the violence and dismay, the general bedlam. Right now, thinking about it even from this distance, it makes me set my heart against them. I remember years before, before I turned to drinking full time, reading an extraordinary scene in a novel by an Italian named Italo Svevo. The narrator's father was dying and the family had gathered around the bed, weeping and waiting for the old man to expire, when he opened his eyes to look at each of them for the last time. When his gaze fell on the narrator he suddenly stirred and something came into his eyes; and with his last burst of strength he raised up, flung himself across the bed, and slapped the face of his son as hard as he could. Then he fell back onto the bed and died. I often imagined my own deathbed scene in those days, and I saw myself doing the same thing, only I would hope to have the strength to slap each of my kids and my last words for them would be what only a dying man would have the courage to utter.

But they saw craziness on every side, and it suited their purpose, I was convinced. They fattened on it. They liked being able to call the shots, having the upper hand, while we bungled along letting them work on our guilt. They might have been inconvenienced from time to time, but they ran things their way. They weren't embarrassed or put out by any of the activities that went on in our house either. To the contrary. It gave them something to talk about with their friends. I've heard them regaling their pals with the most frightful stories, howling with laughter as they spilled out the lurid details of what was happening to me and

their mother. Except for being financially dependent on Cynthia, who still somehow had a teaching job and a monthly paycheck, they flat-out ran the show. And that's what it was too, a show.

Once Mike locked his mother out of the house after she'd stayed overnight at Ross's house . . . I don't know where I was that night, probably at my mother's. I'd sleep over there sometimes. I'd eat supper with her and she'd tell me how she worried about all of us; then we'd watch TV and try to talk about something else, try to hold a normal conversation about something other than my family situation. She'd make a bed for me on her sofa—the same sofa she used to make love on, I supposed, but I'd sleep there anyway and be grateful. Cynthia came home at seven o'clock one morning to get dressed for school and found that Mike had locked all the doors and windows and wouldn't let her in the house. She stood outside his window and begged him to let her in—please, please, so she could dress and go to school, for if she lost her job what then? Where would he be? Where would any of us be then? He said, "You don't live here any more. Why should I let you in?" That's what he said to her, standing behind his window, his face all stopped up with rage. (She told me this later when she was drunk and I was sober and holding her hands and letting her talk.) "You don't live here," he said.

"Please, please, please, Mike," she pleaded. "Let me in."

He let her in and she swore at him. Like that, he punched her hard on the shoulders several times—whop, whop, whop—then hit her on top of the head and generally worked her over. Finally she was able to change clothes, fix her face, and rush off to school.

All this happened not too long ago, three years about. It was something in those days.

I left my mother with the man on her sofa and drove around for a while, not wanting to go home and not wanting to sit in a bar that day either.

Sometimes Cynthia and I would talk about things—"reviewing the situation" we'd call it. But now and then on rare occasions we'd talk a little about things that bore no relation to the situation. One afternoon we were in the living room and she said, "When I was pregnant with Mike you carried me to the bathroom when I was so sick and pregnant I couldn't get out of bed. You carried me. No one else will ever do that, no one else could ever love me in that way, that much. We have that, no matter what. We've loved each other like nobody else could or ever will love the other again."

We looked at each other. Maybe we touched hands, I don't recall.

Then I remembered the half-pint of whisky or vodka or gin or Scotch or tequila that I had hidden under the very sofa cushion we were sitting on (oh, happy days!) and I began to hope she might soon have to get up and move around—go to the kitchen, the bathroom, out to clean the garage.

"Maybe you could make us some coffee," I said. "A pot of coffee might be nice."

"Would you eat something? I can fix some soup."

"Maybe I could eat something, but I'll for sure drink a cup of coffee."

She went to the kitchen. I waited until I heard her begin to run water. Then I reached under the cushion for the bottle, unscrewed the lid, and drank.

I never told these things at AA. I never said much at the meetings. I'd "pass" as they called it: when it came your turn to speak and you didn't say anything except "I'll pass tonight, thanks." But I would listen and shake my head and laugh in recognition at the awful stories I heard. Usually I was drunk when I went to those first meetings. You're scared and you need something more than cookies and instant coffee.

But those conversations touching on love or the past were rare. If we talked, we talked about business, survival, the bottom line of things. Money. Where is the money going to come from? The telephone was on the way out, the lights and gas threatened. What about Katy? She needs clothes. Her grades. That boyfriend of hers is a biker. Mike. What's going to happen to Mike? What's going to happen to us all? "My God," she'd say. But God wasn't having any of it. He'd washed his hands of us.

I wanted Mike to join the army, navy, or the coast guard. He was impossible. A dangerous character. Even Ross felt the army would be good for him, Cynthia had told me, and she hadn't liked him telling her that a bit. But I was pleased to hear this and to find out that Ross and I were in agreement on the matter. Ross went up a peg in my estimation. But it angered Cynthia because, miserable as Mike was to have around, despite his violent streak, she thought it was just a phase that would soon pass. She didn't want him in the army. But Ross told Cynthia that Mike belonged in the army where he'd learn respect and manners. He told her this after there'd been a pushing and shoving match out in his drive in the early morning hours when Mike had thrown him down on the pavement.

Ross loved Cynthia, but he also had a twenty-two-year-old girl named Beverly who was pregnant with his baby, though Ross assured Cynthia he loved her, not Beverly. They didn't even sleep together any longer, he told Cynthia, but Beverly was carrying his baby and he loved all his

children, even the unborn, and he couldn't just give her the boot, could he? He wept when he told all this to Cynthia. He was drunk. (Someone was always drunk in those days.) I can imagine the scene.

Ross had graduated from California Polytechnic Institute and gone right to work at the NASA operation in Mountain View. He worked there for ten years, until it all fell in on him. I never met him, as I said, but we talked on the phone several times, about one thing and another. I called him once when I was drunk and Cynthia and I were debating some sad point or another. One of his children answered the phone and when Ross came on the line I asked him whether, if I pulled out (I had no intention of pulling out, of course; it was just harassment), he intended to support Cynthia and our kids. He said he was carving a roast, that's what he said, and they were just going to sit down and eat their dinner, he and his children. Could he call me back? I hung up. When he called, after an hour or so, I'd forgotten about the earlier call. Cynthia answered the phone and said "Yes" and then "Yes" again, and I knew it was Ross and that he was asking if I was drunk. I grabbed the phone. "Well, are you going to support them or not?" He said he was sorry for his part in all of this but, no, he guessed he couldn't support them. "So it's no, you can't support them," I said, and looked at Cynthia as if this should settle everything. He said, "Yes, it's no." But Cynthia didn't bat an eye. I figured later they'd already talked that situation over thoroughly, so it was no surprise. She already knew.

He was in his mid-thirties when he went under. I used to make fun of him when I had the chance. I called him "the weasel," after his photograph. "That's what your mother's boyfriend looks like," I'd say to my kids if they were around and we were talking, "like a weasel." We'd laugh. Or else "Mr. Fixit." That was my favorite name for him. God bless and keep you, Ross. I don't hold anything against you now. But in those days when I called him the weasel or Mr. Fixit and threatened his life, he was something of a fallen hero to my kids and to Cynthia too, I suppose, because he'd helped put men on the moon. He'd worked, I was told time and again, on the moon project shots, and he was close friends with Buzz Aldren and Neal Armstrong. He'd told Cynthia, and Cynthia had told the kids, who'd told me, that when the astronauts came to town he was going to introduce them. But they never came to town, or if they did they forgot to contact Ross. Soon after the moon probes, fortune's wheel turned and Ross's drinking increased. He began missing work. Sometime then the troubles with his first wife started. Toward the end he began taking the drink to work with him in a thermos. It's a modern operation out there, I've seen it—cafeteria lines, executive dining rooms,

and the like, Mr. Coffees in every office. But he brought his own thermos to work, and after a while people began to know and to talk. He was laid off, or else he quit—nobody could ever give me a straight answer when I asked. He kept drinking, of course. You do that. Then he commenced working on ruined appliances and doing TV repair work and fixing cars. He was interested in astrology, auras, I Ching—that business. I don't doubt that he was bright enough and interesting and quirky, like most of our ex-friends. I told Cynthia I was sure she wouldn't care for him (I couldn't yet bring myself to use the word "love" about that relationship) if he wasn't, basically, a good man. "One of *us*," was how I put it, trying to be large about it. He wasn't a bad or an evil man, Ross. "No one's evil," I said once to Cynthia when we were discussing my own affair.

My dad died in his sleep, drunk, eight years ago. It was a Friday night and he was fifty-four years old. He came home from work at the sawmill, took some sausage out of the freezer for his breakfast the next morning, and sat down at the kitchen table, where he opened a quart of Four Roses. He was in good enough spirits in those days, glad to be back on a job after being out of work for three or four years with blood poisoning and then something that caused him to have shock treatments. (I was married and living in another town during that time. I had the kids and a job, enough troubles of my own, so I couldn't follow his too closely.) That night he moved into the living room with his bottle, a bowl of ice cubes and a glass, and drank and watched TV until my mother came in from work at the coffee shop.

They had a few words about the whiskey, as they always did. She didn't drink much herself. When I was grown, I only saw her drink at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's—eggnog or buttered rums, and then never too many. The one time she had had too much to drink, years before (I heard this from my dad who laughed about it when he told it), they'd gone to a little place outside Eureka and she'd had a great many whiskey sours. Just as they got into the car to leave, she started to get sick and had to open the door. Somehow her false teeth came out, the car moved forward a little, and a tire passed over her dentures. After that she never drank except on holidays and then never to excess.

My dad kept on drinking that Friday night and tried to ignore my mother, who sat out in the kitchen and smoked and tried to write a letter to her sister in Little Rock. Finally he got up and went to bed. My mother went to bed not long after, when she was sure he was asleep. She said later she noticed nothing out of the ordinary except maybe his snoring seemed heavier and deeper and she couldn't get him to turn on

his side. But she went to sleep. She woke up when my dad's sphincter muscles and bladder let go. It was just sunrise. Birds were singing. My dad was still on his back, eyes closed and mouth open. My mother looked at him and cried his name.

I kept driving around. It was dark by now. I drove by my house, every light ablaze, but Cynthia's car wasn't in the drive. I went to a bar where I sometimes drank and called home. Katy answered and said her mother wasn't there, and where was I? She needed five dollars. I shouted something and hung up. Then I called collect to a woman six hundred miles away whom I hadn't seen in months, a good woman who, the last time I'd seen her, had said she would pray for me.

She accepted the charges. She asked where I was calling from. She asked how I was. "Are you all right?" she said.

We talked. I asked about her husband. He'd been a friend of mine and was now living away from her and the children.

"He's still in Richland," she said. "How did all this happen to us?" she asked. "We started out good people." We talked a while longer; then she said she still loved me and that she would continue to pray for me.

"Pray for me," I said. "Yes." Then we said good-bye and hung up.

Later I called home again, but this time no one answered. I dialed my mother's number. She picked up the phone on the first ring, her voice cautious, as if expecting trouble.

"It's me," I said. "I'm sorry to be calling."

"No, no, honey, I was up," she said. "Where are you? Is anything the matter? I thought you were coming over today. I looked for you. Are you calling from home?"

"I'm not at home," I said. "I don't know where everyone is at home. I just called there."

"Old Ken was over here today," she went on, "that old bastard. He came over this afternoon. I haven't seen him in a month and he just shows up, the old thing. I don't like him. All he wants to do is talk about himself and brag on himself and how he lived on Guam and had three girlfriends at the same time and how he's traveled to this place and that place. He's just an old braggart, that's all he is. I met him at that dance I told you about, but I don't like him."

"Is it all right if I come over?" I said.

"Honey, why don't you? I'll fix us something to eat. I'm hungry myself. I haven't eaten anything since this afternoon. Old Ken brought some Colonel Sanders over this afternoon. Come over and I'll fix us some scrambled eggs. Do you want me to come get you? Honey, are you all right?"

I drove over. She kissed me when I came in the door. I turned my face. I hated for her to smell the vodka. The TV was on.

"Wash your hands," she said as she studied me. "It's ready."

Later she made a bed for me on the sofa. I went into the bathroom. She kept a pair of my dad's pajamas in there. I took them out of the drawer, looked at them, and began undressing. When I came out she was in the kitchen. I fixed the pillow and lay down. She finished with what she was doing, turned off the kitchen light, and sat down at the end of the sofa.

"Honey, I don't want to be the one to tell you this," she said. "It hurts me to tell you, but even the kids know it and they've told me. We've talked about it. But Cynthia is seeing another man."

"That's O.K.," I said. "I know that," I said and looked at the TV. "His name is Ross and he's an alcoholic. He's like me."

"Honey, you're going to have to do something for yourself," she said.

"I know it," I said. I kept looking at the TV.

She leaned over and hugged me. She held me a minute. Then she let go and wiped her eyes. "I'll get you up in the morning," she said.

"I don't have much to do tomorrow. I might sleep in a while after you go." I thought: after you get up, after you've gone to the bathroom and gotten dressed, then I'll get into your bed and lie there and doze and listen to your radio out in the kitchen giving the news and weather.

"Honey, I'm so worried about you."

"Don't worry," I said. I shook my head.

"You get some rest now," she said. "You need to sleep."

"I'll sleep. I'm very sleepy."

"Watch television as long as you want," she said.

I nodded.

She bent and kissed me. Her lips seemed bruised and swollen. She drew the blanket over me. Then she went into her bedroom. She left the door open, and in a minute I could hear her snoring.

I lay there staring at the TV. There were images of uniformed men on the screen, a low murmur, then tanks and a man using a flamethrower. I couldn't hear it, but I didn't want to get up. I kept staring until I felt my eyes close. But I woke up with a start, the pajamas damp with sweat. A snowy light filled the room. There was a roaring coming at me. The room clamored. I lay there. I didn't move.

Choose another writer in this calendar:

by name:
A B C D E F G H
I J K L M N O P
Q R S T U V W X
Y Z

by birthday from the calendar.

Credits and feedback

TimeSearch for Books and Writers by *Bamber Gascoigne*

Raymond Carver (1938-1988) - in full Raymond Clevie Carver

American short-story writer and poet, a major force in the revitalization of the short story in the 1980s. Carver's reputation continued to grow after his death at the age of fifty. Robert Altman's much praised film *Short Cuts* (1993) was based on several of Carver's stories. His short fiction is often placed in the realistic tradition of Stephen Crane and Ernest Hemingway and its post-modern version, called minimalism. Carver himself did not like the label, because it "smacks of smallness of vision and execution."

> **"I love the swift leap of a good story, the excitement that often commences in the first sentence, the sense of beauty and mystery found in the best of them; and the fact – so crucially important to me back at the beginning and now still a consideration - that the story can be written and read in one sitting. (Like poems!)** (from foreword in *Where I'm Calling From*, 1998)

Raymond Carver was born in Clatskanie, a mill town on the Columbia River in Oregon. His father, Clevie Carter, a sawmill worker, was an alcoholic. At home he used to tell him stories about his own hunting and fishing exploits, and about his grandfather, who had fought in the Civil War, for both sides. In 'Elephant', one of Carver's best stories, the narrator recalls his father nostalgically. On the other hand, 'Nobody Said Anything' tells about a young boy, who becomes the target of his father's frustration. Carver's mother, Ella Beatrice, worked as a waitress or as a retail clerk or else stayed home.

Carver was educated at a local school in Yakima, Washington. On his spare time read mostly Mickey Spillane's novels, or *Sports Afield* and *Outdoor Life*. After graduating in 1956, he married his high-school girlfriend, the sixteen-year-old Maryann Burk. She was pregnant and just graduated from an Episcopalian private school for girls. When her second child was born, she was eighteen. After graduating from Davis High school, Carver supported his family by working as a janitor, laborer at a sawmill and salesman. During their marriage, Maryann worked as a waitress, salesperson, and administrative assistant and teacher. Usually she earned more than he did. Their children had a rough childhood but eventually both become college graduates.

Carver became interested in writing in California, where he had moved with his family - his wife's parents had a home in Paradise. Carver attended a creative-writing course, and was taught by John Gardner. Later he said that all his writing life "he had felt Gardner looking over his shoulder when he wrote, approving or disapproving of certain words, phrases and strategies." (Carver's former student Jay McInerney in *The New York Times*, August 6, 1989) Carver continued his studies first at Humboldt State College in California, receiving his B.A. in 1963, and at the University of Iowa. Before Humboldt he attended Chico State University; later Chicoans started to arrange a Raymond Carver festival. At Palo Alto at Science Research Associates he worked as a textbook editor until he was

fired in 1970. In the 1970s Carver taught for several years at universities throughout the United States. From 1980 to 1983 he was a professor of English at Syracuse University.

While still at Humboldt, Carver published his first story, 'Pastoral,' in the *Western Humanites Review,* and his first poem, 'The Brass Ring,' in *Targets*, which also had a poem by Charles Bukowski. During these years of working in different jobs, rearing kids, and trying to write, Carver started to drink. "Alcohol became a problem. I more or less gave up, threw in the towel, and took to full-time drinking as a serious pursuit." (from *Writers at Work.*, ed. by George Plimpton, 1986) In 1967 his story 'Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?' was selected for the anthology *Best American Short Stories*, edited by Martha Foley. In the fall semester of 1973, Carver was a teacher in the Iowa's Writers' Workshop with John Cheever, but later he said that they did nothing *but* drink. Not too long after leaving Iowa City, Cheever went to a treatment center, but Carver continued drinking for some years. Alcohol was a subject in several stories, among others in such as 'Chef's House,' 'A Serious Talk,' 'What We Talk About When We Talk About Love,' in which an elderly couple drinks in their kitchen, 'Vitamins,' about a man who do not realize that he has a drinking problem, and 'Where I'm Calling From,' in which the narrator has ended up in an alcohol rehabilitation center.

Carver's first collection of short stories, *Put Yourself in My Shoes*, came out in 1974. It was followed by *Will Yoy Please Be Quiet, Please?* (1976) which established his reputation and introduced his central themes. "Most prevalent among these constants is the isssue of love," Kirk Nesset wrote in *The Stories of Raymond Carver* (1995), "or, more precisely, the issue of love and its absence, and the bearing of love's absence on marriage and individual identity." The title story of the book was was nominated for a National Book Award. *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* (1981) contained seventeen stories. "[Carver] has done what many of the most gifted writers fail to do," said Michael Wood in *The New York Times Books Review*. "He has invented a country of his own, like no other except that very world, as Wordsworth said, which is the world to all of us."

In his prose Carver mixed the simple clarity of Chekhov with the ominous tones of Franz Kafka. "It is possible to write a line of seemingly innocuous dialogue and have it send a chill along the reader's spine – the source of artistic delight, as Nabokov would have it. That's the kind of writing that most interests me." (Carver in *The New York Times*, February 15, 1981) Gordon Lish, an editor at Esquire and then at Alfred A. Knopf, later told that he had a crucial role in the creation of these early works, but Carver never acknowledged in public his debt to Lish. However, in *Writers at Work* (1986) Carver praises Lish's skills: "... he is remarkably smart and sensitive to the needs of a manuscript. He' s a good editor. Maybe he's a great editor. All I know for sure it that he's my editor and my friend, and I'm glad on both counts." Among these stories, which Lish edited, constantly cutting out talks about feelings, were 'Mr. Coffee and Mr. Fixit,' 'Fat,' and 'Tell the Women We're Going.'

Carver's works appeared in a number of the volumes of the *Best American Short Stories* and *The O. Henry Prize Stories*. On June 2, 1977

Carver stopped drinking with the help of Alcoholics Anonymous. His doctor had warned, that he would die if he did not stop drinking. After this 'line of demarcation' Carver's stories became increasingly more expansive. In 1982 Carver divorced Maryann. From 1979 Carver had lived with the poet Tess Gallagher (b.1943), they had met at a writers' conference in Dallas. They married in 1988. The wedding took place in Reno. Two months later, on August 2, 1988, the author died of lung cancer. Selection of his short fiction, *Where I'm Calling From*, appeared posthumously in 1988. After writing its last story, 'Errand,' about Chekhov's death, Carver learned that he had cancer.

Carver received several awards, among them The National Endowment for the Arts award in fiction (1980) and Guggenheim fellowship (1979-80). In 1983 he was recipient of the "Mildred and Harold Strauss Livings", which was conferred by a special panel of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters.

Much of what Carver wrote about was based on his own experiences in the Pacific Northwest. "... everything we write is, in some way, autobiographical," he has said. Carver depicted the quiet desperation of the white- and blue-collar workers, salesmen, waitresses, and their sense of betrayal and unableness to express themselves. Things are frequently left unspoken and conflicts unresolved, and the meaning of the story is only revealed through implications.

Carver's prose is often muted, even anticlimactic, but the atmosphere is tense, reminding the mood of Kafka or Harold Pinter. Rejecting the more experimental fiction of the 60s and 70s, Carver became one of the leading figure among so-called 'dirty realists' – for their gritty depictions of everyday life – with Richard Ford, Tobias Wolff, Ann Beattie, and Jayne Anne Philips. In 'Neighbors,' from *Where I'm Calling From*, the Millers, who take care of their neighbors' apartment while the couple is away, find the apartment more attractive than their own, although it don't differ much from it. In 'Why Don't You Dance?' a man whose marriage has failed, sells his furniture at the front yard. A young couple shows some interest in them and dance together in the driveway at the man's suggestion. The surfaces of Carver's stories look calm and banal, but especially his portrayals of marriage problems are full of emotional tension, hidden memories, wounds, longing, hate, anxiety, and melancholy.

Carver's poetry was written in the vernacular lyric-narrative mode of William Carlos Williams and Charles Bukowski. Although Carver began as a poet, he once confessed that he is not a "born" poet, and when he had to make a choice, he came down on the side of fiction. However, in 1984 Carver returned to Pacific Northwest and published two collections of poetry, *Where Water Comes Together with Other Water* (1985) and *Ultramarine* (1986). He shared the 1985 Levinson Prize for these books.

For further information: *Raymond Carver: A Writer's Life* by Carol Sklenicka (2009); *Encyclopedia of World Literature*, Vol. 1., ed. by Steven R. Serafin (1999); *Cult Fiction* by Andrew Calcutt and Richard Shephard (1998); *Raymond Carver: An Oral Biography* by Sam Halpert (1995); *The Stories of Raymond Carver* by K. Nesset (1995); *The Reader's Companion to Twentieth Century* Writers, ed. by Peter Parker (1995);

Remembering Ray, ed. by W. Stull and M.P. Carroll (1993); *Reading Raymond Carver* by Randolph Paul Runyon and Stephen Dobyns (1992); *Raymond Carver: A Study of the Short Fiction* by E. Campbell (1992); *When We Talk About Raymond Carver*, ed. by S. Haplert (1991); *Understanding Raymond Carver* by A.M. Saltzman (1988); *Writers at Work.*, ed. by George Plimpton (1986) - **Suomeksi** on julkaistu mm. runovalikoimat *Rivi riviltä, lyönti lyönniltä*, suom. Lauri Otonkoski, Esko Virtanen (1994) sekä *(Sateisten päivien jälkeen): Valitut runot*, suom. Arto Lappi & Juha Rautio (2013). **Film adaptation:** Robert Altman's *Short Cuts* (1993), based on Carver's stories, starring Andie MacDowell, Bruce Davidson, Jack Lemmon, Zane Cassidy, Julianne Moore, Matthew Modine, Anne Archer, Fred Ward, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Chris Penn, Joseph C. Hopkins, Josette Macario, Robert Downey Jnr, Madeleine Stowe, Tim Robbins, Lily Tomlin, Tom Waits, Frances McDormand, Peter Gallagher, Annie Ross, Lori Singer, Lyle Lovett, Buck Henry.

Selected bibliography:

- Near Klamath, 1968
- Winter Insomnia, 1970 (prints by Robert McChesney)
- Put Yourself in My Shoes, 1974 (block prints by Marcia/Maris)
- Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?, 1976
- At Night The Salmon Move: Poems, 1976 (illustrated by Marcia/maris)
- Furious Seasons and Other Stories, 1977
- At Night the Salmon Move, 1978
- What We Talk About When We Talk About Love, 1981
  - Mistä puhumme kun puhumme rakkaudesta (three short stories: 'Se kolmas asia joka teki isästäni lopun,' 'Mistä puhumme kun puhumme rakkaudesta,' 'Pieni hyvä asia', suom. Raija Mattila, 1986; Seppo Lahtinen, 2015)
  - feature films: Everything Must Go, 2010, dir. Dan Rush, starring Will Ferrell, Rebecca Hall, Christopher Jordan Wallace (based on the short story Why Don't You Dance); Birdman: Or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance), 2014, dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu, starring Michael Keaton, Zach Galifianakis, Edward Norton
- The Pheasant, 1982
- Two Poems, 1982
- Cathedral: Stories, 1983
  - feature films: Feathers, 1987, dir. John Ruane, starring James Laurie, Neil Melville, Rebecca Gilling; Cathedral, 2002, dir. Bruce Schwartz, starring Allyce Beasley, James Eckhouse, Mark Rolston
- Fires: Essays, Poems, Stories, 1983
  - Tulet (teoksessa (Sateisten päivien jälkeen): Valitut runot, suom. Arto Lappi & Juha Rautio, 2013)
- If It Please You, 1984
- For Tess, 1984
- We Are Not In This Together: Stories / William Kittredge, 1984 (edited & with a foreword by Raymond Carver)
- The Stories of Raymond Carver, 1985
- Dostoevsky: A Screenplay, 1985 (with Tess Gallagher)
- This Water: Poems, 1985
- Where Water Comes Together With Other Water: Poems, 1985
  - Missä vedet yhtyvät toisiin vesiin (teoksessa (Sateisten päivien jälkeen): Valitut runot, suom. Arto Lappi & Juha Rautio, 2013)

- Ultramarine, 1986
  - Ultramariini (teoksessa (Sateisten päivien jälkeen): Valitut runot, suom. Arto Lappi & Juha Rautio, 2013)
- Those Days: Early Writings by Raymond Carver: Eleven Poems and a Story, 1987 (edited by William L. Stull)
- Elephant and Other Stories, 1988
- Where I'm Calling From: New and Selected Stories, 1988
  - Vielä yksi asia: kertomuksia (suom. Raija Mattila, 1998)
- In a Marine Light: Selected Poems, 1988
- A New Path To The Waterfall: Poems, 1989 (introduction by Tess Gallagher)
  - Uusi polku vesiputoukselle (teoksessa (Sateisten päivien jälkeen): Valitut runot, suom. Arto Lappi & Juha Rautio, 2013)
- Conversations with Raymond Carver, 1990 (edited by Marshall Bruce Gentry and William L. Stull)
- Carver Country: The World of Raymond Carver, 1991 (photographs by Bob Adelman; introduction by Tess Gallagher)
- No Heroics, Please: Uncollected Writings, 1992 (edited by William L. Stull; foreword by Tess Gallagher)
- Carnations, 1992
- Short Cuts: Selected Stories, 1993
  - Oikopolkuja (suom. Raija Mattila, 1994)
- All of Us: The Collected Poems, 1996
- Call If You Need Me: The Uncollected Fiction & Other Prose, 2000 (edited by William J. Stull; foreword by Tess Gallagher)
- Carver: Collected Stories, 2009 (edited by William L. Stull and Maureen P. Carroll)

Some rights reserved Petri Liukkonen (author) & Ari Pesonen. Kuusankosken kaupunginkirjasto 2008

Authors' Calendar jonka tekijä on Petri Liukkonen on lisensoitu Creative Commons Nimeä-Epäkaupallinen-Ei muutettuja teoksia 1.0 Suomi (Finland) lisenssillä.

*May be used for non-commercial purposes. The author **must** be mentioned. The text may not be altered in any way (e.g. by translation). Click on the logo above for information.*