

Blood Meridian- Cormac McCarthy

Note: all quotes with syntax questionable.... Lots of McCarthy with no apostrophes, run on sentences, repeat "ands", jilted talking, no quotes, etc.

"His origins are become remote as is his destiny and not again in all the world's turning will there be terrains so wild and barbarous to try whether the stuff of creation may be shaped to man's will or whether his own heart is not another kind of clay."

"I was never in Fort Smith in my life. Doubt that he was. They looked from one to the other. Well where was it you run up on him? I never laid eyes on the man before today. Never even heard of him. He raised his glass and drank. There was a strange silence in the room. The men looked like mud effigies. Finally someone began to laugh. Then another. Soon they were all laughing together. Someone bought the judge a drink."

"I come from Mississippi. I was a slaver, don't care to tell it. Made good money. I never did get caught. Just got sick of it. Sick of niggers.... There is four things that can destroy the earth, he said. Women, whiskey, money, and niggers."

"Aye, said the old man. But where does a man come by his notions. What world's he seen that he liked better? I can think of better places and better ways. Can ye make it be? No."

"Each foreseeing a night of drink, perhaps of love. How many youths have come home cold and dead from just such nights and just such plans."

"The wrath of God lies sleeping. It was hid a million years before men were and only men have power to wake it. Hell ain't half full. Hear me. Ye carry war of a madman's making onto a foreign land. Ye'll wake more than the dogs."

"I know your kind, he said. What's wrong with you is wrong all the way through you."

"The forefinger was gone at the first joint and perhaps he was showing them what happened in Texas or perhaps he merely meant to count the years."

"Sparse on the mesa, the dry weeds lashed in the wind like the earth's long echo of lance and spear in old encounters forever unrecorded. All the sky seemed troubled and night came quickly over the evening land and small gray birds flew crying softly after the fled sun. He chucked up the horse. He passed and so passed all into the problematical destruction of darkness."

"Here beyond men's judgements all covenants were brittle."

"For this will to deceive that is in things luminous may manifest itself likewise in retrospect and so by sleight of some fixed part of a journey already accomplished may also post men to fraudulent destinities."

"And so these parties divided upon that midnight plain, each passing back the way the other had come, pursuing as all travelers must inversions without end upon other men's journeys."

"There's little equity in the Lord's gifts.... The gifts of the Almighty are weighed and parceled out in a scale peculiar to himself. It's no fair accountin and I don't doubt but what he'd be the first to admit it and you put the query to him boldface."

"The expriest shook his head. Oh it may be the Lord's way of showin how little store he sets by the learned. Whatever could it mean to one who knows all? He's an uncommon love for the common man, and godly wisdom resides in the least of things, so that it may well be that the voice of the Almighty speaks most profoundly in such being as lives in silence themselves."

“God speaks in the least of creatures...No man is give leave of that voice... I aint heard no voice he said. When it stops, said Tobin, you’ll know you’ve heard it all your life.”

“Someplace in the scheme of things this world must touch the other.”

“What’s he a judge of? Tobin glanced off across the fire. Ah lad, he said. Hush now. The man will hear ye. He’s ears like a fox.”

“They rode in a narrow enfilade along a trail strewn with the dry round turds of goats and they rode with their faces averted from the rock wall and the bakeoven air which it rebated, the slant black shapes of the mounted men stenciled across the stone with a definition auster and implacable like shapes capable of violating their covenant with the flesh that authored them and continuing autonomous across the naked rock without reference to sun or man or god.”

“He sketched with a practiced ease and there was no wrinkling of that bald brow or pursing of those oddly childish lips.”

“For whoever makes a shelter of reeds and hides has joined his spirit to the common destiny of creatures and he will subside back into the primal mud with scarcely a cry. But who builds in stone seeks to alter the structure of the universe and so it was with these masons however primitive their works may seem to us.”

“Wolves cull themselves, man. What other creature could? And is the race of man not more predacious yet? The way of the world is to bloom and to flower and die but in the affairs of men there is no waning and the noon of his expression signals the onset of night. His spirit is exhausted at the peak of its achievement. His meridian is at once his darkening and the evening of his day. He loves games? Let him play for stakes. This you see here, these ruins wondered at the tribes of savages, do you not think that this will be again? Aye. And again. With other people, with other sons.”

“For although each man among them was discrete unto himself, conjoined they made a thing that had not been before and in that communal soul were wastes hardly reckonable more than those whited regions on old maps where monsters do live and where there is nothing other of the known world save conjectural winds.”

“Notions of chance and fate are the preoccupation of men engaged in rash undertakings.”

“You can’t be all Mexican. It’s like being all mongrel.”

“Fool, he said. God will not love ye forever.”

“Toadvine sat watching him as he made his notations in the ledger, holding the book toward the fire for the light, and he asked him what was his purpose in all this. The Judge’s quill ceased its scratching.... Whatever exists, he said. Whatever in creation exists without my knowledge exists without my consent.”

“He’d long forsworn all weighing of consequence and allying as he did that men’s destinies are given yet he usurped to contain within him all that he would ever be in the world and all that the world would be to him and be his charter written in the urstone itself he claimed agency and said so and he’d drive the remorseless sun on to its final endarkenment as if he’d ordered it all ages since.”

“The truth about the world, he said, is that anything is possible. Had you not seen it all from birth and thereby bled it of its strangeness it would appear to you for what it is a hit trick in a medicine show, a fevered dream, a trance bepopulate with chimeras having neither analogue nor precedent, an itinerant carnival, a migratory tentshow whose ultimate destination after many a pitch in many a mudded field is unspeakable and calamitous beyond reckoning.”

“It makes no difference what men think of war, said the judge. War endures. As well ask men what they think of stone. War was always here. Before man was, war waited for him. The ultimate trade awaiting its ultimate practitioner. That is the way it was and will be. That way and not some other way.”

“Moral law is an invention of mankind for the disenfranchisement of the powerful in favor of the weak.”

“Hear me, man. I spoke in the desert for you and you only and you turned a deaf ear to me. If was is not holy man is nothing antic clay.”

“Of such corporal histories even as these he bore no tidings and although it was the custom in the wilderness to stop with any traveler and exchange the news he seemed to travel with no news at all, as if the doings of the world were too slanderous for him to truck with, or perhaps too trivial.”

“In any event the history of all is not the history of each nor indeed the sum of those histories and none here can finally comprehend the reason for his presence for he has no way of knowing even in what the event consists.”

“Men’s memories are uncertain and the past that was differs little from the past that was not.”

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