

*The Road- Cormac McCarthy*

Note: all quotes with syntax questionable.... Lots of McCarthy with no apostrophes, run on sentences, repeat “ands, jilted talking, no quotes, etc. For all the strong reviews, this was my least favorite of his writings thus far. Found the apocalyptic future w/o a backstory a bit frustrating (who were the “bad guys”, how were they organized, why were they going to coast, what happened to cause the ash, what was the family relation), even if he does use those sort of unexplained frames in his other stuff. The boy often is more benevolent and trusting than the father. The glimpse at the death of the wife interesting. The hidden bunker, time on the shore rummaging through the ship, and stumbling on the people chained to the basement also good writing.

“Just remember that the things you put into your head are there forever, he said. You might want to think about that. You forget some things, don’t you? Yes. You forget what you want to remember and you remember what you want to forget.”

“You promised not to do that, the boy said. What? You know what, Papa. He poured the hot water back into the pan and took the boy’s cup and poured some of the cocoa into his own and then handed it back. I have to watch you all the time, the boy said. I know. If you break little promises you’ll break big ones. That’s what you said.”

“When you’ve nothing else construct ceremonies out of the air and breathe upon them.”

“He thought each memory recalled must do some violence to its origins. As in a party game. Say the word and pass it on. So be sparing. What you alter in the remembering has yet a reality, known or not.”

“He could not construct for the child’s pleasure the world he’d lost without constructing the loss as well and he thought perhaps the child had known this better than he. He tried to remember the dream but he could not. All that was left was the feeling of it. He thought perhaps they’d come to warn him. Of what? That he could not enkindle in the heart of the child what was ashes in his own.”

“People were always getting ready for tomorrow. I didn’t believe in that. Tomorrow wasn’t getting ready for them. It didn’t even know they were there.”

“