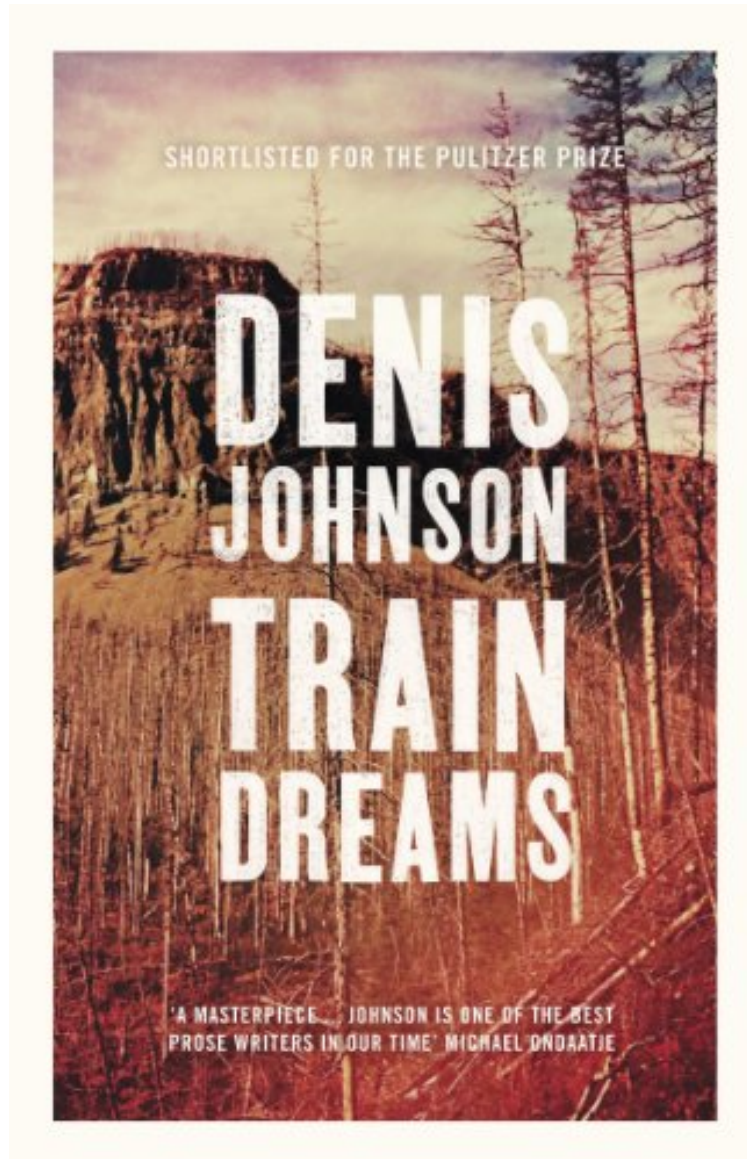


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Train Dreams

Von Denis Johnson

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Von Denis Johnson : Train Dreams before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Train Dreams:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Moderner KlassikerVon buecheroeliEin Buch mit dem Zeug zum Klassiker. Sehr erstaunlich wie gut es Johnson gelingt, in einem sehr kurzen Buch die Lebensgeschichte und -philosophie eines Mannes im Westen der Vereinigten

Staaten darzustellen. Es ist viel über das Buch geschrieben worden und es sollte in keiner Bibliothek fehlen.³ von 3 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Ein Epos von einem Bndchen Von M. A. Spannring Mehr als 116 Seiten braucht diese Geschichte nicht, um mehr zu erzählen, als mancher Ein-Kilo-Wlzer. Anhand der Lebensgeschichte des Robert Grainer erzählt sie glücklicherweise über das Mannsein, über den Urboden der heutigen republikanischen Kreise in den USA, über die Liebe, ja - über das Leben an sich. Sagenhaft, wie der Autor Figuren teils mit wenigen literarischen "Pinselstrichen" plastisch und nuancenreich erstehen lässt. Zwischen beglückend und erschütternd der gewaltige Resonanzboden seiner lakonischen Stze, der dem Leser /der Leserin so vieles - und oft das Wesentliche - nicht sagt, sondern im Tiefbau des Textes "injiziert". Mit Robert Grainer nimmt sich die Erzählung des zurückgezogenen Lebens eines einfachen Mannes an. Eines Mannes, der prototypisch für eine ganze Aufbaugeneration in Nordamerika - und wohl auch in Europa - stehen kann. Ein Mann, der hinnimmt und ehern weitermacht, wenn er in einer Brandkatastrophe Frau und Kind verliert, wenn sein abgearbeiteter Körper ihm schon mit 40 vom Ende kündigt, wenn Trüme, ngste, Lste durch ihn hindurchrauschen. Das als "tapfer" oder "heldenhaft" zu verkünden, wäre ein Missverständnis. Es ist der Mangel an Möglichkeiten, vielleicht an Fantasie, die ihn seinen Weg weitergehen lassen, bis er ihn in die vollkommenen Einsamkeit führt. Und selbst die lebt er am Ende gingsam und ohne Klagen. Denis Johnson's Erzählung "Train Dreams" macht deutlich: So einfach und reduziert im Ausdruck kann ein Mensch gar nicht sein, dass sich darin nicht die ganze Fülle menschlicher Gefühle, Sehnsüchte und Dramen abspielt und spiegelt.

Kurzbeschreibung Robert Grainer is a day labourer in the American West at the start of the twentieth century - an ordinary man in extraordinary times. Shipped by train in 1893 into the woods of the Idaho panhandle, he grows up, works on logging gangs, falls in love, and loses his wife and baby daughter to a particularly pernicious wildfire. Derailed by the loss of his family, Grainer struggles to make sense of this strange new world. As his story unfolds, we witness both his shocking personal defeats and the radical changes that transform America in his lifetime. Suffused with the history and landscapes of the American West, Train Dreams captures the disappearance of a distinctly American way of life. Pressestimmen [A] severely lovely tale . . . The visionary, miraculous element in Johnson's deceptively tough realism makes beautiful appearances in this book. The hard, declarative sentences keep their powder dry for pages at a time, and then suddenly flare into lyricism; the natural world of the American West is examined, logged, and frequently transfigured. I started reading Train Dreams' with hoarded suspicion, and gradually gave it all away, in admiration of the story's unaffected tact and honesty . . . Any writer can use simple prose to describe the raising of a cabin or the cutting down of tress, but only very good writers can use that prose to build a sense of an entire community, and to convey, without condescension, that this community shares some of the simplicity of the prose. Chekhov could do this, Naipaul does it in his early work about Trinidad, and Johnson does it here, often using an unobtrusive, free indirect style to inhabit the limited horizons of his characters . . . A way of being, a whole community, has now disappeared from view, and is given brief and eloquent expression here. James Wood, The New Yorker National Book Award winner Johnson (Tree of Smoke) has skillfully packed an epic tale into novella length in this account of the life of Idaho Panhandle railroad laborer Robert Grainer . . . The gothic sensibility of the wilderness and isolated settings and Native American folktales, peppered liberally with natural and human-made violence, add darkness to a work that lingers viscerally with readers . . . Highly recommended. Library Journal (starred) National Book Award-winner Johnson, ever the literary shape-shifter, looks back to America's expansionist fever dream in a haunting frontier ballad about a loner named Robert Grainer . . . Johnson draws on history and tall tales to adroitly infuse one contemplative man's solitary life with the boundless mysteries of nature and the havoc of humankind's breakneck technological insurgency, creating a concentrated, reverberating tale of ravishing solemnity and molten lyricism. Donna Seaman, Booklist Readers eager for a fat follow-up to Tree of Smoke could be forgiven a modicum of skepticism at this tidy volume . . . but it would be a shame to pass up a chance to encounter the synthesis of Johnson's epic sensibilities rendered in miniature in the clipped tone of Jesus' Son . . . An ode to the vanished West that captures the splendor of the Rockies as much as the small human mysteries that pass through them, this svelte stand-alone has the virtue of being a gem in itself, and, for the uninitiated, a perfect introduction to Johnson. Publisher's Weekly (starred) Denis Johnson's Train Dreams is like a long out-of-print B-side, a hard-to-find celebrated work treasured by those in the know that's finally become available to the rest of us . . . Train Dreams is a peculiarly gripping book. It palpably conjures the beauty of an American West then still very much a place of natural wonder and menace, and places one man's lonely life in that landscape, where he's at once comfortably at home and utterly lost. Dan DeLuca, The Philadelphia Inquirer Johnson is one of our finest writers. His characters are usually not the high and mighty but the down-and-out, sometimes marginalized individuals who struggle to communicate their deeper longings or their encounters with the transcendent. A poet, he infuses his narratives with images that sparkle and even jolt but never overwhelm the reader . . . Johnson has the unique ability to draw us into a story and a character until we encounter our own questions about mortality and meaning . . . when we leave this man and this book, we feel the loss, which reverberates in our own souls. We recognize in Grainer's dreams of trains our own fears and longings. Johnson in his

poignant prose helps us feel such things. Gordon Houser, *The Wichita Eagle* *Train Dreams* is a gorgeous, rich book about the classic American myth, but written for a country that's lost faith in its own mythology . . . *Train Dreams*, lush with grief, regret, and lowered expectations, is a lesson in end-of-the-frontier humility for a country anticipating apocalypse. K. Reed Perry, *Electric Literature* Johnson captures the feeling of the woods and the small towns built around mining, logging and the new railroads. Indians and Chinese laborers also play significant roles . . . The writing is spare and frequently beautiful; Johnson's backwoods dialogue and tall tales are often hilarious; and he graces us with such wonderful words as 'pulchritude' and 'confabulation'--it's a shame we don't hear them much anymore. Stephen K. Tollefson, *San Francisco Chronicle* This musical little novella, originally published in 2003 in the *Paris*, is set mostly in the 1920s, and in the logging camps and train-station towns of Idaho and of the Pacific Northwest. It is wholly Johnson's own. His hero, Robert Grainier, a sometimes logger and sometimes hauler, is as dislocated as any wandering druggie from an earlier Johnson book. And in these logging camps and train towns, Johnson has found a territory as strange and unpredictable as any dystopic landscape of his imagination. In a way, *Train Dreams* puts me in mind of a late Bob Dylan album: with the wildness and psychedelia of youth burned out of him, Johnson's eccentricity is revealed as pure Americana. Gabriel Brownstein, *The Plain Dealer (Cleveland)* A meditative, often magical book . . . Deceptively simple language and arresting details make this a book to read slowly . . . Johnson's portrait of a man who stands still as life marches on is itself something timeless. Kate Tuttle, *Boston.com* Take the time to peruse Johnson's corpus, and the inescapable conclusion is that its recurring elements are passions, revisited thoughtfully, not out of complacency or lack of imagination. *Train Dreams* drives this spike home in two ways. The first is that its time period marked a major departure for Johnson, one presumably demanding a staggering deal of research. The second is that its tone, more subdued than Johnson's usual, had to have presented a challenge. He manages to avoid two of the snares that await writers of historical fiction--on the one hand, anachronism . . . on the other hand, an anxious dependency on archaic words and cherry-picked, jarring period detail. Maybe it helped matters that Johnson is a poet. His language keeps frontier passion in the yoke of plausible old-time discretion . . . [*Train Dreams* has] a delicacy of language and a mythic simplicity of storytelling that would slip the grasp of many writers. Stefan Beck, *The Barnes and Noble* [*Train Dreams*] is a triumph of spare writing that sketches the life of [Robert] Grainier, a logger and hauler born in 1886, and who dies, in a different world, in 1968 . . . in a blend of myth and history, Johnson builds a world around Grainier . . . Johnson, a poet, playwright and novelist, won the National Book Award in 2007 for his sprawling Vietnam War novel, *Tree of Smoke*. But he goes short as well as he goes long. *Train Dreams* . . . is a gem of a story, set in rough times, in a tough terrain, and tenderly told. Bob Minzesheimer, *USA Today* Johnson's new novella may be his most pared-down work of fiction yet, but make no mistake--it packs a wallop . . . *Train Dreams* is a small book of weighty ideas. It renders the story of America and our westward course of empire in the most beautiful and heartbreaking manner imaginable . . . *Train Dreams* explores what was lost in the process of American growth. Much to his credit, Johnson doesn't simply posit industry and nature against each other, or science and religion, or even human and animal, but instead looks at how their interactions can transform both. And [Robert] Grainier is there through all of this examination, over the course of his long and sad life, to serve as our witness and maybe even our conscience. Andrew Ervin, *The Miami Herald* I first read Denis Johnson's *Train Dreams* in a bright orange 2002 issue of *The Paris* and felt that old thrill of discovery . . . Every once in a while, over the ensuing nine years, I'd page through that *Paris* and try to understand how Johnson had made such a quietly compelling thing. Part of it, of course, is atmosphere. Johnson's evocation of Prohibition Idaho is totally persuasive . . . The novella also accumulates power because Johnson is as skilled as ever at balancing menace against ecstasy, civilization against wilderness. His prose tiptoes a tightrope between peace and calamity, and beneath all of the novella's best moments, Johnson runs twin strains of tenderness and the threat of violence . . . it might be the most powerful thing Johnson has ever written. Anthony Doerr, *The New York Times Book* Johnson beautifully conveys what he calls the 'steadying loneliness' of most of Grainier's life, the ordinary adventures of a simple man whose people are, we hear, the hard people of the northwestern mountains,' and toward the end even convinces us of his character's inquisitive and perhaps even deeper nature than we might first have imagined. Grainier lived more than eighty years, well into the 1960s,' we learn. Most people who read this beautifully made word-engraving on the page will find him living on. Alan Cheuse, *NPR* *Train Dreams* is a portrait of containment, of compression and restraint . . . On the one hand, what Johnson is evoking is the sweep of time, of history, as seen through an archetypal life. Grainier is an ideal filter for such an effort: born in one century, living mostly in another, he becomes a three-dimensional metaphor for the industrialization of the country, the slow passage from rural to commercial, the commodification of our collective soul. And yet, as he generally does, Johnson has something more elusive in mind also, something more fundamental and intense . . . Here, Johnson gets at the key issue of his writing: the fluid divide between spirit and substance, his sense that the metaphysical is always with us, even if we can't decipher what it means . . . As for what this says about the country Grainier represents, perhaps it's that we are bound, at the deepest level, by something elemental, something that eludes reason, or even language but tells a story just the same. Such a story exists between terror and transcendence, between the wild and the tame. David. L. Ulin, *The Los Angeles Times* *Train Dreams* is an eloquently scattershot biography of a fictional labourer who lived much of his life in the woods, alone. It's a compressed epic about wolf-children, ghosts,

wilderness, fearsome weather and the lingering threads that kept man tied to animal in the western parts of our continent--a connection lost to the past century . . . [It] is as magnificent, spellbinding and intermittently awkward as anything Denis Johnson has ever done . . . Johnson, with his affinity for poetically deformed vernacular, vividly evokes the satisfactions and tolls of work: men living in tents left over from the Civil War, long days, foul smells that cling to the body, shoulders that lock up and joints that won't hold, accidental deaths--and not-so-accidental deaths . . . Johnson imbues the handful of remarkable experiences Grainier did have with reverence: a first kiss, a brush with racist violence that nearly made Grainier an accomplice to murder, the time a man from Alberta took Grainier up in a plane and prompted a spilling forth of forgotten childhood sensations. None of this feels inflated or forced. For the short while it takes to read *Train Dreams* we are held in its grip, pulled by our shirt-fronts. This book is a small, glinting, oddly shaped treasure. Jos Teodoro, *Edmonton Journal* While in [Johnson's] writerly company you cannot help but believe that the world is a function of his apprehension of it, and it is this quality that lends his matchless prose its sense of having been less written than received, an effortless and profound transmission, radio waves unscrolling in the black sea between the prairie and the star map--all that heady bullshit, but ringing true . . . *Train Dreams* is also very funny. Quirky, colorful, off-beat characters intrude on Grainier's solitude at regular intervals, each one a babbling fool. There are roughnecks and Indians and a man dying in the woods of knife wounds to the backs of his knees. When a risqu film screens in town Grainier is nearly done in with lust by the word "pulchritude" on a promotional poster. A man reports himself shot by his own dog . . . Padgett Powell once wrote that Johnson takes loss through some kind of sound barrier, past which celebrations of joy in destitution appear. For clean line, for deftness, for hard honest comedy there is no better than Denis Johnson.' That seems exactly right to me. Justin Taylor, *The Faster Times* Grainier's story is the story of an ordinary man told in an extraordinary way in extraordinarily spare yet magical prose . . . some of Johnson's best writing is on display here. It is a book of wonders both real and imagined, of great locomotives that traversed the continent and sawmills that conquered the big woods, of a curse by a persecuted Chinaman' that (perhaps) brings destruction on Grainier's wife and daughter and their little cabin in the woods, a great fire Grainier would remember his entire life, like something Biblical in modern times. As with Johnson's best work, the prose and the story itself start out in a realistic way, plain and serious but with a little smirk, and then take us someplace else: the plainness becomes poetic; the seriousness becomes hallucinatory, as if to say that we should take serious things seriously, but that it is also more complicated than merely taking them seriously; and the smirk--the smirk of a saint who finally has achieved religious ecstasy and who smirks because he knows he was right all along . . . The world he creates is the real world but always teetering on hallucination, on myth, on turning into something other than its plain, concrete, realistic surface. It is the world on the verge of spiritual transcendence and illumination, and it is the world on the verge of nothingness. It is the world we know and don't know, and it seems always about to vanish before our eyes . . . *Train Dreams* is an important little book, and Denis Johnson is an important, big writer, and I hate to think of a time when he and a few others like him will not be there to protect us from our modern desire to flee the human world into something less human, less scary, less alive--and less permanent. Anthony Wallace, *The Arts Fuse* At his worst, man is haunted by the past--the past reappearing in our dreams as a constant reminder of mistakes, of loved ones lost and of the indelible mark left on our memory by the sometimes violent imagery of life. Denis Johnson . . . portrays these sentiments in *Train Dreams*, a perfectly understated novella that tells the story of everyman Robert Grainier . . . Grainier is a man ultimately measured by movement: "He'd started his life story on a train ride he couldn't remember, and ended up standing around outside a train with Elvis Presley in it." Like the distant rumble of the locomotive in the still of night, memory acts as both a comfort and a disquieting reminder of the linear trajectory leading toward and away from him. Lucas Sarcona, *News* Denis Johnson's novel . . . is like a crystal: hard, gem-like, and intricately structured . . . Johnson's prose is simple yet lyrical, and its clear beauty often reflects the things it describes . . . Even more striking are the descriptions of Grainier's almost elemental lonesomeness. Anthony Domestico, *Commonweal* Kurzbeschreibung Robert Grainer is a day labourer in the American West at the start of the twentieth century - an ordinary man in extraordinary times. Shipped by train in 1893 into the woods of the Idaho panhandle, he grows up, works on logging gangs, falls in love, and loses his wife and baby daughter to a particularly pernicious wildfire. Derailed by the loss of his family, Grainer struggles to make sense of this strange new world. As his story unfolds, we witness both his shocking personal defeats and the radical changes that transform America in his lifetime. Suffused with the history and landscapes of the American West, *Train Dreams* captures the disappearance of a distinctly American way of life.