

FAULKNER PRAISES *Moby-Dick*

William Faulkner

(1897-1962)

“I think that the book which I put down with the unqualified thought ‘I wish I had written that’ is *Moby-Dick*. The Greek-like simplicity of it: a man of forceful character driven by his somber nature and his bleak heritage, bent on his own destruction and dragging his immediate world down with him with a despotic and utter disregard of them as individuals; the fine point to which the various natures caught (and passive as though with a foreknowledge of unalterable doom) in the fatality of his blind course are swept--a sort of Golgotha of the heart become immutable as bronze in the sonority of its plunging ruin; all timeless phase: the sea. And the symbol of their doom: a White Whale. There’s a death for a man, now; none of your patient pasturage for little grazing beasts you can’t even see with the naked eye. There’s magic in the very word. A White Whale. White is a grand word, like a crash of massed trumpets; and leviathan himself has a kind of placid blundering majesty in his name. And then put them together!!! A death for Achilles, and the divine maidens of Patmos to mourn him, to harp white-handed sorrow on their golden hair.”

William Faulkner
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