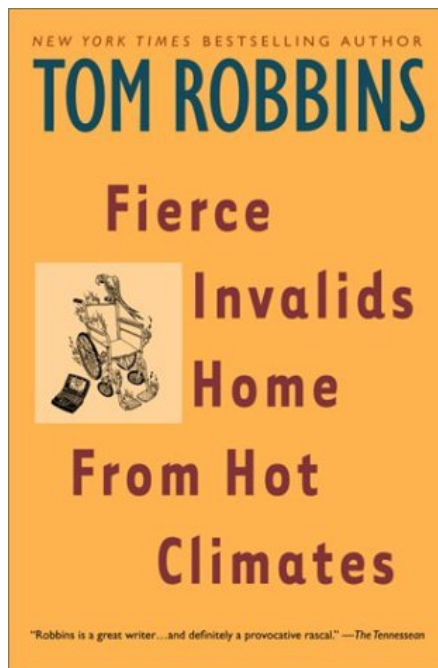




Fierce Invalids Home from Hot Climates

Tom Robbins

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Switters is a contradiction for all seasons: an anarchist who works for the government; a pacifist who carries a gun; a vegetarian who sops up ham gravy; a cyberwhiz who hates computers; a man who, though obsessed with the preservation of innocence, is aching to deflower his high-school-age stepsister (only to become equally enamored of a nun ten years his senior). Yet there is nothing remotely wishy-washy about Switters. He doesn't merely pack a pistol. He *is* a pistol. And as we dog Switters's strangely elevated heels across four continents, in and out of love and danger, discovering in the process the "true" Third Secret of Fatima, we experience Tom Robbins--that fearless storyteller, spiritual renegade, and verbal break dancer--at the top of his game. On one level this is a fast-paced CIA adventure story with comic overtones; on another it's a serious novel of ideas that brings the Big Picture into unexpected focus; but perhaps more than anything else, *Fierce Invalids* is a sexy celebration of language and life.

Fierce Invalids Home from Hot Climates Details

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From Reader Review Fierce Invalids Home from Hot Climates for online ebook

Tim says

I am embarrassed to admit that this is the first thing I have read by Robbins! Of course, I heard of him long ago, and saw the movie version of "Even Cowgirls Get the Blues" (which may have turned me off), but why has it taken me so long to sit down and spend some time with him? I plan to correct that error. Robbins is one heckofa writer! His stuff is loony, thought-provoking, hysterically funny, highly creative, lively, impertinent, stylized - I could go on for a while here - all at the same time. Whatever you want to call it, it is not subtle or stupid or dull. This is one of the most enjoyable and entertaining novels I have ever read. (I listened to an audiobook of this, btw, very well performed by Keith Szarabajka).

Robbins's genius is that he borrows techniques from poetry and literary fiction and employs them in his goofy, satirical stories. There are soaring similes and brilliant descriptions aplenty here, but they are applied to everyday or wacky situations. This is not everyday humor though. Included are elements of mysticism, social and political comedy, sex and romance, and international intrigue.

The zany, picaresque story follows a character named Switters, a CIA agent who lusts after stepsister and spends time with his grand dame grandma, a lady known as Maestra. He is sent to rural Peru on some mission or other, where a native shaman with a pyramid-shaped head (due to some old head shaping techniques used on infants) places a curse on him - his feet can never touch the ground again or he will immediately die. So he spends the rest of the novel, first in a wheelchair, and eventually on a pair of stilts. After getting discharged from the CIA (portrayed here as a network of rogues with no particular political goals), he ends up trying to fulfill his infatuation with his teenaged stepsister. (Don't worry, none of this is meant to be taken seriously). From there he is on his way to Iraq and Syria to engage in some sort of espionage, and ends up under the protection of a small convent of radical Christian nuns, who are sitting on a secret prophecy that the Catholic Church is trying to suppress.

The framework provides an excuse for Switters to deal with a bunch of kooky characters (like his CIA buddy Bobby, a macho Texas good ol' boy, and Domino, the abbess of the convent), and for him to get trashed and throw around zingers and cockeyed comments. It is all in good fun, but Robbins can surprise by throwing in the occasional serious observation or thoughtful aside, such as critical comments on consumer culture. His discussion of the Hermetic tradition got me researching it online - there is nothing like a little wisdom mixed in with some fun. To use the cliché, it was hard to put this one down - I wanted the laughs and clever writing to go on and on. It has been a while since I have fallen this hard for a writer, but this book hit the sweet spot for me.

Leslie Gal says

Some people love this shit and find it oh so witty and creative, but to me the perfect phrase to describe this book (and all Tom Robbins) is "verbal masturbation." If you value the simple beauty of good prose, you will feel dirty after ol Robbins spews gratuitous, barely cogent metaphors willy-nilly all over your literary face line after nauseating line. Robbins is clearly getting off on his own cleverness; it's just too bad he didn't stop to think about your needs.

Danger says

Everytime I don't know what to buy people for Christmas or their birthday, I just get them a copy of this book. I give them two months and then ask what they thought of it. If they say they loved it, we continue to be friends. If they didn't like it, I challenge them to a gladiator-style death match. As you could surmise by the fact that I'm writing this right now, I've never lost a death match. That's how much I love this book.

Adam says

This is the third novel by Tom Robbins that I have read, and by far the most enjoyable.

Switters, a CIA agent, is about to be sent on assignment in South America. Hearing that, his elderly computer-hacking grandmother in Seattle asks, or rather orders, him to take her aged pet parrot back to the Peruvian jungle so that it could spend its dotage with fellow parrots rather than in a cage. Switters meets a shaman in the jungle. This fellow meets Switters and takes an interest in the parrot's unusually shaped cage. After the meeting, Switters becomes confined to a wheelchair unwilling to let his feet make even the slightest contact with the earth.

Confined to his wheelchair, Switters lands up in the Syrian desert, where he is sheltered by an unusual order of nuns. It would spoil the reader's enjoyment if I reveal any more of the plot of this highly entertaining novel.

Zany as usual, the author takes the reader on numerous philosophical detours, but none of these detract from the plot or its suspense. Although I did put this book down from time to time, it is truly 'un-put-down-able'.

Lisa says

Fierce Invalids Home from Hot Climates
Current mood: disappointed

"Could you pull off there? " she immediately asked, pointing ... to a gas station. "I really have to use the bathroom."

"Say toilet, would you darling. I don't believe bathing is one of the services Texaco provides."

"Whatever."

"No, it's not unimportant. Intelligent speech is under pressure in our fair land and needs all the support it can get."

above is my favorite part of this book, which i would NOT recommend to others.

not being a huge reader of robbins, i did like skinny legs, found this and decided to give it a try. about 3/4 of the way through i found myself not caring about this pompous, arrogant man who i found to be a walking

contradiction, too proud or blind to see it himself. but, i did want to see the book through, since i had given it a good 3 weeks of my life. the ending, in my opinion was open, left to interpretation. i did NOT put this book down feeling satisfied!

Scott says

4.5 STARS

Sarah says

Likely my favorite book of all time. Former CIA agent Switters treks through the Amazon searching for shaman named "The End of Time/ Today IS Tomorrow," accompanied only by his parrot who lives by the motto "Peep of zee wurl, relax!" I spit every time I hear the name "John Foster Dulles." Ingenious.

Arax Miltiadous says

απ? που να ξεκιν?σω...

Εν αρχ?ς ο Σουίτερς ε?ναι ο πιο αγαπημ?νος μου φανταστικ?ς ?ρωας. η απολυτ? αντ?φαση, η λαγνε?α, η εξυπν?δα, η επιρρ?πεια σε ?λων των ειδ?ν τις απολα?σεις και τις πρωτ?γνωρες εμπειρ?ες. Η γνωριμ?α μου μαζ? του συντ?λεσε στην αναδιαμ?ρφωση της κοσμοθεωρ?ας μου και της οπτικ?ς που αντιμετωπ?ζω τη ζω?.

Τι να ναι αυτ? λοιπ?ν, που θα μπορο?σε να αν?γει μια γν?ση σε απαγορευμ?νη?

Και π?σο μακρι? διατ?θεται κ?ποιος να φτ?σει για να απαντ?θει αυτ? ερ?τημα?

Ε?ναι η ζω? ?να σ?νολο φυσικ?ν φαινομ?νων και συμπτ?σεων? ? ?στω, η ψευδα?σθηση τους?

Ε?ναι η ηθικ? ?πλα θ?μα του εκ?στοτε πολιτισμικ? περιβ?λλοντος?

Φωτισμ?νος ε?ναι ο ?νθρωπος, με διευρυμ?νη την συνε?δηση και την Χρυσ? Τομ? του Χιο?μορ?

ΑΘΡΩΠΟΙ ΟΛΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΚΟΘΜΟΥ...ΧΑΛΑΡΩΘΕ ΕΠΙΤΕΛΟΥΘ!!!!

where to start by ...

In the beginning Switters is my favorite fictional hero. The absolute contradiction, lust, intelligence, susceptibility to all kinds of pleasures and new experiences. My acquaintance with him was instrumental in the reshaping of my worldview and vision of life encounter.

What this then, that could reduce a forbidden knowledge;
and how far we can go in order to answer this question;

Life is a set of natural phenomena and coincidences; the very least, the illusion of them;

morality is simply a matter of individual cultural environment;

Enlightened is the man with enlarged consciousness and the Golden Section of Humor;

Tim Darnell says

This book is by no small margin my favorite novel of all time.

First off, Switters is the greatest single character to emerge from modern literature pure and simple. Not only is he hilarious and a great role model for any law enforcement employee, but his personal philosophies (not discounting his desire to plow his step-sister,) are intriguing and captivating. "Rather than eschewing his contradictory nature, as is typical Western practice, Switters embraces it. He's a CIA agent who hates the government. He's a pacifist who carries a gun. He's as much in love with a sixteen-year-old girl as he is with a forty-six-year-old nun. Switters feels that the core of the universe, the heart of existence, is light and dark existing together. One is not separate from the other, they just exist,"(-The Wikipedia Page for Fierce Invalids). He is totally bad-assed, and while a little difficult to like or identify with at first, he quickly and enthusiastically grows on you.

The story itself is fascinating, zany, off the wall, engaging, and at times nerve wracking. The philosophies presented within are engaging and thought provoking, and presented in an incredibly accessible (no, not dumbed down, but artistic...) and well thought out way. An exciting and provocative discourse on the nature of Duality, this book not only has a purpose behind every minute action therein, but disguises it in such a way that it goes unnoticed until a thorough debriefing is held between the kid in you (who likes Fierce Invalids for its comedic, world hopping spy thriller action with sexy ladies and awesome protagonists,) and the wannabe philosopher in you (who'll love it for its stylistic diction and damn near poetic prose, its dense symbolism, and its staggering humanistic study of dualism.)

I can't begin to do this book justice in this discription. Its a great book, and if you're not affraid to think while you read, you should check it out.

Robin says

Sometimes you find a book at the wrong time in your life, and you think how much you would have liked it if you had read it 10 years ago. This is one of those books for me.

I kept reading anyways, probably because there are enough funny/interesting parts to propel you through the annoying parts.

Someone recommended it to me when I was a college freshman, but I only recently got around to reading it. He told me something along the lines of "you're sex positive, so you would enjoy this sexy romp of a book." I don't remember exactly how he described it, but something like that. I probably would have like it back then as an eighteen year old, because it is raunchy and seemingly philosophical. I say seemingly, because if you let yourself be whipped around by Robbins' wordplay, it seems clever, but if you really pay attention, it's fairly routine sort of philosophizing. And a lot of trying waaaaay too hard to point out some truth or theory about humanity. WAAAAAY too hard. I kept thinking, "Um, is that it? Am I suposed to be in suspense?" Nope.

But really why this book is wrong for the 28 year old me is the disappointing extent to which women are discussed and portrayed. The unbelievably standard view of teenage virgins as the ultimate in sexiness is presented as a risky taboo in the book. Oh! The shocking desires of the main character! (/sarcasm) Is there any sexual desire LESS predictable??? I think not. Not to mention all the descriptions of sex scenes that are so not what get women all hot and bothered--even though he implies that aaaaall the women in the book want it, and they want it from Switters soooo bad. I don't know why so many guys think that girls love it when you twist and pinch our nipples, but we don't. Really. We don't. Stop that.

I'm pretty sure this book is who the author wishes he was--super clever CIA agent that all the girls are after, having crazy adventures and saying any random thing he thinks, all of which come out sounding clever and deep. Good for you, Robbins, I'm glad you have dreams.

Stephen says

HEADLINE: I do not care much for John Foster Dulles either.

Tim Robbins makes my smile muscles hurt. The man's work in the form of this novel is completely over the top. The protagonist is Switters, a CIA operative. CIA operatives from Switters's own point of view come in two flavors, cowboys and angels. Switters of course sees himself in the latter category.

The plot is of the wildly improbable sort. It takes Switters from Seattle, to Peru, into a wheelchair, to Central Syria and Damascus, onto stilts, then to the Vatican, off the stilts and out of the wheelchair. However, the plot is not the point. The plot is merely a pretext for Switters's pontifications on subjects ranging from sex to philosophy to politics to popular culture. And Switters never met a metaphor or simile that he did not like.

I had a serious problem with Switters's carrying his Beretta in his waistband and his drawing down on his antagonist with the intention of shooting the pistol out of that antagonist's hand. But nobody is perfect, and if there was ever a less than perfect hero, Switters is it. He is a seriously comprised hero with a penchant for illegally young girls, the vintner's product to excess, the odd mind-altering substance here and there, anal sex with nuns, and *Finnegan's Wake*. Yet it never crosses our mind—at least it never crossed my mind that he must be forgiven for anything. He is a man child with access to adult pleasures.

Perhaps I have too much of an affinity with his opinions. When I first encountered his phrase “South too-goddamn-vivid America,” for the first time very early in this novel, I was with him. I am living in Central pretty-goddamn-vivid America myself right now. And with material like this, I stayed with him:

Exactement! Marketing. Merchandising. Increasingly sophisticated, increasingly seductive. And sure, it's just a flashy modern version of the age-old bread-and-circuses brand of bondage—except today the bakery's a multinational and the circus follows us home. Well, culture has always been driven to some degree by the marketplace. Always. It's just that nowadays the marketplace, having invaded every nook and cranny of our private lives, is completely supplanting culture, the marketplace has *become* our culture. Nevertheless. . .

The villain of the novel is John Foster Dulles, and you cannot do much better than that for a villain. Switters spits after every mention of the man's name. Consider this exchange found toward the end of this novel with a copyright of 2000:

"What is wrong with your great country?" Toufic lamented. "Why must it do these terrible things?"

Switters held a cloud of candied smoke in his lungs. "Because the cowboys wiped out the buffalo," Switters said.

"Everywhere a buffalo fell," said Switters, "a monster sprang up in its place."

Switters was going to list some of the monsters, but his mouth was dry, and he feared he couldn't expectorate.

"There's a direct link between the buffalo hunts and Vietnam," said Switters.

Straining to comprehend, Toufic sighed with his eyes.

"When Lee surrendered at Appomattox," said Switters, "it sealed once and for all Wall Street's power over the American people."

Switters said, "There's a direct link between Appomattox and genuine imitation leather."

"But," Toufic lamented, "your country has so much."

"Well," said Switters, "it has bounce. It has snap. It has flux"

"Americans are generous and funny, the ones I have met," Toufic lamented, "but I am compelled to oppose them."

"It's only natural," said Switters, "American foreign policy invites opposition. It invites terrorism."

Switters said, "Terrorism is the only imaginable logical response to America's foreign policy, just as street crime is the only imaginable logical response to American's drug policy."

Whatever one thinks of that, one has to admire the courage of Switters's smoke-fueled convictions.

°°°.°..°°°.°_· ????? Ροζουλ? Εωσφ?ρος ·_·°°°.°° .°°° ★·.·~·.★ ?????? ???????
?????? Ταμετο?ρο Αμ says

"ΑΓΑΠΑΩ ΤΟΝ ΕΑΥΤΟ ΜΟΥ. ΑΛΛΑ ΕΙΝΑΙ ΑΓΑΠΗ ΧΩΡΙΣ ΑΝΤΑΠΟΚΡΙΣΗ".

Σ?γουρα,τεκμηριωμ?να και εμπεριστατωμ?να,οι ιδρωμ?νοι επαναστ?τες που διαλογ?ζονται για να φτ?σουν στην ?σχατη πραγματικ?τητα του τ?ποτα,απεχθ?νονται να αλυσοδ?νονται απο μονιμ?τητες και ιδιοκτησ?ες.

Αυτο? οι δολιοφθορε?ς της εξτρεμιστικ?ς ?μπνευσης, που αποτελο?ν την ανταν?κλαση του θεμελι?δους ν?μου του σ?μπαντος και επιταχ?νουν την πραγματικ?τητα -την οπο?α παραδ?χονται μ?νο ως εικονικ?- ε?ναι το ουρλιαχτ? που προ?ρχεται απο μια παραδοχ?:

Οι αγριεμ?νοι αν?πηροι που επιστρ?φουν απο καυτ? κλ?ματα αγαπιο?νται παρ?φορα απο τις γυναι?κες....(προσωπικ? ?ποψη).

Ο Τομ Ρ?μπινς -στο εξ?ς αγαπημ?νος και ξεχωριστ?ς- ορμ?ει με γλυκι? και σεμν? χυδαι?τητα π?νω στον αναγν?στη και τον εκμαυλ?ζει συνειδησιακ? οδηγ?ντας τον στην παραμεθ?ριο γν?ση του κ?σμου.

Ο τρ?πος γραφ?ς του ε?ναι σοκαριστικ?ς.

Παραπα?ει αν?μεσα σε συμπαντικ? δ?πολα και υπερχειλ?σεις φιλοσοφ?ας,ευφυ?ας,?μπνευσης, εν?ρασης, ενσυνα?σθησης και αρχ?γονων κρυμμ?νων νοημ?των.

«Χιο?μορ, φαντασ?α, Ερωτισμ?ς- σε αντιδιαστολ? με το ?λογο ενστικτ?δες ζευγ?ρωμα των σκουληκι?ν ? των ρακο?ν- η Πνευματικ?τητα, η Επαναστατικ?τητα και η Αισθητικ?, η εκτ?μηση της ομορφι?ς για χ?ρη της ομορφι?ς και μ?νο... Αυτ? ε?ναι τα χαρακτηριστικ? που ορ?ζουν τον ?νθρωπο... »

Καταφ?ρνει με πλ?ρη ?νεση, χιο?μορ,ερωτισμ?,ευαισθησ?α, λαγνε?α ποιητικ? και πολιτικ?,πρ?στυχη ψυχεδελικ? ονε?ρωξη και ?πειρες γνωστικ?ς μεταμφι?σεις να σε κ?νει θιασ?τη αγγ?λων και δαιμ?νων.

«Ε?σαι πολ?πλοκος ?νθρωπος, αλλ? ευτυχισμ?να πολ?πλοκος. ?χεις βρει ?ναν τρ?πο να συμφιλιωθε?ς με τη σ?γχυση του κ?σμου, ?ναν τρ?πο για να αγκαλι?σεις το χ?ος αντ? να παλε?εις να το μει?σεις ? να π?σεις θ?μα του. Για σ?να ε?ναι ?λα μ?ρος του παιχνιδιο? και σ'αρ?σει να πα?ξεις».

Στο προκε?μενο, ο Σου?τερς (?νας απο τους πιο χαρισματικο?ς και αξιολ?τρευτους λογοτεχνικο?ς ?ρωες) πρ?κτορας της CIA,ε?ναι ?τοιμος για μια αποστολ? στη Ν?τιο Αμερικ?.

Η υπερ?λικη γιαγι? του,δι?νοια στον χειρισμ? ηλεκτρονικ?ν υπολογιστ?ν και Μα?στρα της ζω?ς του, τον διατ?ζει να π?ρει μαζ? του τον ηλικιωμ?νο παπαγ?λο της για να τον απελευθερ?σει στο φυσικ? του περιβ?λλον.

Στην Περουβιαν? ζο?γκλα ο Σου?τερς προσπαθ?ντας να κ?νει το καθ?κον του συναντ?ει ?ναν Σαμ?νο ιερ?α,μ?γο,γιατρ? και αρχηγ? της εξωκοσμικ?ς ?κστασης.

Μετ? απο μια παραληρηματικ? ν?χτα με τον ψυχοπομπ? της ζο?γκλας,ο Σου?τερς περν?ει μια μεταβαλλ?μενη κατ?σταση συνε?δησης καταραμ?νος να με?νει για ?λη του τη ζω? σε αναπηρικ? καρ?τσι.

Απο εκε? και μετ? αρχ?ζει η παρ?νοια της πραγματικ?τητας που δεν μπορο?ν να κατανο?σουν ?σοι ζουν στο φυσικ? κ?σμο και διαθ?τουν μ?νο τη γ?ινη αντ?ληψη των πραγμ?των.

Ο Τενεσ? Ου?λιαμς ?γραψε κ?ποτε :

« Ζο?με ?λοι μ?σα σε ?να σπ?τι που κα?γεται και δεν υπ?ρχει πυροσβεστικ? για να καλ?σουμε. Δεν

υπ?ρχει ο?τε ?ξοδος, μ?νο ?να παρ?θυρο στον π?νω ?ροφο για να κοιτ?ζουμε ?ξω εν? η φωτι? κα?ει το σπ?τι με εμ?ς παγιδευμ?νους, κλειδωμ?νους μ?σα»... Εκε?νο που δεν ε?πε ο Τενεσ? ε?ναι ?τι αν κοιτ?ζουμε απ? το παρ?θυρο αυτ? με ?ντονη περι?ργεια και παθιασμ?νο μ?τι, με γενναι?δωρο πνε?μα και την ικαν?τητα της χαρ?ς και, ναι, αν ?χουμε τη γλ?σσα με την οπο?α να στηρ?ζουμε και να εμπλουτ?ζουμε τα πρ?γματα που βλ?πουμε, τ?τε ΔΕΝ ΕΧΕΙ ΣΗΜΑΣΙΑ που το σπ?τι κα?γεται γ?ρω μας. Δεν πειρ?ζει. ?στο να κα?γεται το γαμημ?νο»

Διαβ?στε το!

Ε?ναι ?να μεταστοιχειωμ?νο ταξ?δι σε θ?λασσεσ απ?θानης ευστροφ?ας,τραγικ?ς ζωντ?νιας,ασυγκρ?τητου π?θους,προκλητικο? λ?θους,εσωτερικ?ς φλυαρ?ας,απρ?βλεπτης πτ?σης,ιδια?τερων νοημ?των,κλεμμ?νων ονε?ρων,ανατριχιαστικο? κυνισμο? και σπ?νιες με?ξεις ?μπνευσης και αισθ?σεων.

"Αθρωποι ?λου του κ?θμου,χαλαρ?θε".

Καλ? αν?γνωση!

Πολλο?ς ασπασμο?ς!

foteini_dl says

Καλοκα?ρι=παγωτ?, μπ?νια (?σα και αν ε?ναι αυτ?), συναυλ?ες, μπ?ρες (και κοκτ?ιλ ?ταν ε?μαστε λαρτζ) και Robbins. Και ΚΑΥΣΩΝΑΣ .

Συστατικ? του βιβλ?ου: σ?τιρα,ερωτισμ?ς,ευαισθησ?α, ?ρες-?ρες κυνισμ?ς, μια ζο?γκλα, ?νας παπαγ?λος, μια γιαγ? εξπ?ρ στους υπολογιστ?ς και ο Switters, ?νας απ' τους πιο ενδιαφ?ροντες χαρακτ?ρες του Robbins. Και αναφορ? στον Tennessee Williams.

?νθρωποι ?λου του κ?θμου,χαλαρ?θε.

Rachel Moore says

I was told to read this book by a friend who is absolutely nuts over this author. Tom Robbins is obviously a very smart man and has extremely creative stories.

He has massive vocabulary and I found myself looking up words throughout this novel. In the end I was extremely unsatisfied. Tom Robbins tends to ramble for pages upon pages within this book which is like trying to concentrate on listening to someone talking to you on acid.

It can be boring, long and will relate to absolutely nothing in the overall plot. I've read a few of his other novels so i could fairly judge his books in my own opinion,but I found it all the same.

Cut out half the rambling and I may have enjoyed it more. Robbins seems to be one of those authors that has

caught on because people seem to find it "trendy" to have read.

I may be alone in thinking this, but I will probably never willingly read another of his again. Like I said before, he is smart, witty and extremely creative, but its not enough to make me want to ever read a book this long of his again.

The one thing I've ever really loved of his is a short essay called "Redheads". The key word here is SHORT. ;)

Lindsay says

i've well acquainted with the pantheon of tom robbins (except for wild ducks flying backward- saving that for a rainy day), but i have to count myself among the many who consider this a favorite of the bunch. well written, fast, and full of shamanic/monastic greatness. i would even say a tour de force if that wasn't the shittiest, most hackneyed phrase in book reviewdom.

E says

Top 5.

Switters is my hero. An absurd and rollicking good time. If you enjoy philosophy, drugs, booze, sex and laughing...you should be into this.

Will C says

Probably my favorite Tom Robbins novel, one of the few with a male protagonist (some of his books focus on female leads, and a few have couples, but the narration generally focuses on the woman). Switters, the nymphet-chasing secret agent and self described "acquired taste," finds himself confined to a wheelchair. A shaman's curse (the price of a psychedelic revelation) condemns him to death if his feet ever touch the ground. He starts the novel in love with his underage step sister, working for the CIA, and fully ambulatory. His adventures take him around the world and through theological intrigue, but the main feature of this book is really Switters as a character. The plot, although clever and fun to follow, is mostly a way of putting him in various situations where he can discourse on the meaning of life, language, and pleasure. A friend of mine who also loves this author told me that Switters seemed to her to be the Tom Robbin's character who is the most like Tom Robbins, and this seems intuitively true. For one thing, the content of Switters' monologues, both inner and outer, echo themes that resonate throughout his other novels, and seem in this novel to be gathered in one voice. Also, the form of Switters' speeches echoes the author's style of wording and imagery. The greatest joy of reading Tom Robbins is the way he plays with language as something oral, something that we hear with our ears and make with our mouths. He does things with writing that can only be done in writing, but he never lets the reader forget that language is something sensual, and he invokes the sounds of words, the music of sentences, and even descriptions that vividly sexualize the mechanics of a character (female or male, but usually female) actually pronouncing a certain word.

Except for Nabokov, who Robbins seems to be pretty obviously paying homage to (and perhaps lovingly mocking) with parallels and allusions to "Lolita," no other novelist I've read has captured the sensuality of language on this level. Languages, accents, and even speech impediments seem to be elevated to the highest

objects of aesthetic appreciation in Robbins novels. Robbins can write a conversation, or a thought about a conversation, or even a thought about a word with as much guilty, indulgent enjoyment and libidinal gravity as anyone else can write a sex scene. An employee at an independent bookstore (Liftbridge books, Brockport NY, highly recommended) that Robbins is one of a few specific authors who they regularly argue over putting in "fiction" or "literature," and his work does have the same guilty-pleasure value of trashy novels, and always seems to end happily. Despite that, as someone who appreciates language as something that is at once abstract and intimately connected to us as bodies, I find great intellectual value in his work.

Sarah says

This was the only book I had to hand to read while I sat by my father's bedside for a few days this year. It was ghastly.

I found this book disturbing and boring. (Strike that - it wasn't interesting enough to be disturbing). As mentioned previously the main protagonist and his male friend are paedophiles, and the author made out this was a bit of a joke. Which it isn't.

He also seemed to love the sound of his own (narrative) voice, and, frankly, was tedious. He put flowery sentences in for the sake of it. The book wafted around like a drunken wasp. Annoying, going nowhere and ultimately you just want to slap it down.

It took me ages to read - mainly because once I put it down I couldn't really be bothered to pick it up again - I really didn't care what happened to "Switters". Actually even his name annoyed me. What a stupid upper class twit that name describes - and it fitted.

The idea that this man could be CIA agent is ridiculous.

I don't recommend this to anyone. It was just annoying and I wasted time in my life reading it. BOO.

Kat says

Αυτ? το βιβλ?ο με ?κανε να γελ?σω. Το γ?λιο ε?ναι καλ?, οπ?τε μου ?ρεσε. Πολλ?ς λεπτομ?ρειες που μου ?φεραν ν?στα σε κ?τι φ?σεις σουπερ ντ?γκλας. Δεν αποκλε?εται και το βιβλ?ο να ?χει γραφτε? σε αν?λογες φ?σεις (ψυχεδελικ?ς).

Ο Switters ε?ναι ο καλ?τερος αγριεμ?νος αν?πηρος απ? καυτ? κλ?ματα που γν?ρισα ποτ? και αυτ? γιατ? ε?ναι αυθεντικ?ς.

Μη διαβ?ζετε ?λλα βιβλ?α με δρ?μα και θλ?ψη και ?λα τα κακ? του κ?σμου. Διαβ?στε αυτ?.

Natalie Thomas says

What to call my favorite scene... let's call it: in the bathroom on hands and knees eating salad. Probably the funniest laugh-out-loud scene I have ever read.

