



McSweeney's #18

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McSweeney's began in 1998 as a literary journal, edited by Dave Eggers, which published only works rejected from other magazines. But after the first issue, the journal began to publish pieces written with *McSweeney's* in mind. Soon after, *McSweeney's* attracted works from some of the finest writers in the country, including David Foster Wallace, Ann Cummins, Rick Moody, Heidi Julavits, Jonathan Lethem, William T. Vollmann, and many new talents.

Today, *McSweeney's* has grown to be one of the country's best and largest-circulation literary journals. The journal is committed to finding new voices, publishing work of gifted but underappreciated writers, and pushing the literary form forward at all times.

McSweeney's publishes on a roughly quarterly schedule, and each issue is markedly different from its predecessors in terms of design and editorial focus.

McSweeney's #18 Details

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From Reader Review McSweeney's #18 for online ebook

nicole says

took me FOREVER to finish. i got stuck on adam levin's hot pink, which then wound up being my favorites. i stammered and stalled my way through the second half, eyeing my copy of the corrections (which i am holding on to for the next reading drought). i loved joe meno's story about the wife who turns into a cloud. it made me think of all the things i loved about the boy detective fails, which i read exactly this time last year. if i didn't have so many other books on deck, i'd re-read it.

Matt Lennert says

DFW!

Lynne Wright says

"And did I kiss her then? Did Nancy Christamesta close her eyes and tilt her head back, away from the moon? Did she open her mouth? Did she open it just a little, just enough so I could feel her breath on my chin before she would kiss me and then did I finally kiss her?

Fuck you."

I LOVE YOU, MCSWEENEY's!!

Jesse says

The usual mix of inventive and wearisome. Though it maybe devalued Egan's "The General" as a beautifully satirical story about the later career about a third world dictator, I dug Daniel Orozco's "Somoza's Dream." Joe Meno's "People Are Becoming Clouds" seems like it'll stick, too. Others, who knows?

Jessica says

Although I enjoyed many of the stories in this issue, overall I did not find this crop as wonderful as other McSweeney's pieces I have read. I liked "The Stepfather" by Chris Adrien, "New Boy" by Roddy Doyle, "My Hustlers" by Edmund White, "Happiness Reminders" by Rachel Haley Himmelheber, and "People Are Becoming Clouds" by Joe Meno.

Rosey says

I really enjoyed the first story in this collection. There were a couple others here and there I could get into.

Some I found utterly pointless. What are ya gonna do? You can't please everyone. Nonetheless, I've never been able to get into Joyce Carol Oates' short stories before, and I actually liked her story in here, so maybe I'll try a novel and see what all the hype is about... Overall, it is an okay collection... maybe I'm just not into stories that go essentially nowhere.

Kirsten says

Happiness Reminders by Rachel Himmelheber

The rest...not so much. These issues are kind of like pop-rocks - infectious, and they're exciting the first whirl-around, but inevitably get boring when the novelty is gone. At first, I really wanted a full subscription, but I think I might satiate myself by buying occasional issues that feature writers I already know I like.

Deepthi says

Despite the fatiguing effect of the ever-present "we" and present tense used in most things McSweeney, I still enjoy reading the shorts. This collection, which came with the delightful Wolphin #1 (check out "The Delicious" PLEASE), is the usual assortment of eccentric and poetic prose with the occasional reference to NPR programming (it's an incestuous group, no?) in the mix.

Here's a quick rundown with my preferences:

"The Stepfather" by Chris Adrian

Sort of an adult Lemony Snicket story. Kept my attention, but didn't ultimately seem to say much, but seemed to think it did.

"Somoza's Dream" by Danial Orozco

Right off the bat, I could see endless waves of the present tense ahead, so I skipped it. Sorry! Maybe I'll come back and read it some day.

"New Boy" by Roddy Doyle

One of the standouts, no question. Roddy Doyle is such a sweetie, he's like the literary equivalent of Danny Boyle (hey, they rhyme!) in his love of human emotion and really good music. This story spans just a morning, but an epic journey for a young African student in Ireland.

"One Day This Will All Be Yours" by Philipp Meyer

Read if you feel like hating your family all over again.

"No Cry of Distress in Our Streets" by Alan Ackman

Skimmed it for the most part -- there were a lot of demons involved, but the main characters were dull, and no juicy descriptions of demons to alleviate the prose. Disappointing.

"Hot Pink" by Adam Levin

The best story in the collection, really quite brilliant. I LOVE the voice, so distinct and smart and real. I'd love to see it supplant Updike's "A & P" in intro lit anthologies and classes--fitting since Levin himself teaches. Possibly the best ending to a story ever. I can't wait to read Levin's first novel.

"My Hustlers" by Edmund White

Wow, is this for real? You know it is for many people in many guises. Fascinating and uplifting and downtrodden and utterly disturbing. Reminds me of Oscar Wilde the famously vulnerable figure, not the brilliant playwright.

"Happiness Reminders" by Rachel Haley Himmelheber

Don't like stories where the figures are all named for archetypes, not real people. I didn't really understand the point of the naming scheme in this story.

"In a Bear's Eye" by Yannick Murphy

Short, sweet, with good flow and pretty prose. I like the tight, simple arc that pulls the story together.

"Bad Habits" by Joyce Carol Oates

See "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" for a MUCH better short story by JCO about serial killers and the Midwest.

"The Railway Nurse" by Nelly Reifler

This one certainly took a turn I really wasn't expecting. Very nice, suitably creepy.

"People are Becoming Clouds" by Joe Meno

I like the metaphor here, and the patina of tired melancholy over the main character. At the end, I really did feel the connection to real people that the surreal element was trying to push--an impressive achievement.

"Deb Olin Unferth" by Deb Olin Unferth

Pointless gimmick. Skimmed it.

"We Join Spokes Together in a Wheel" by Lawrence Weschler

Got bored, gave up. Maybe it turned out good.

Maggie says

Great collections of short stories...this is the mcsweeney's issue that grabbed me...two stories, people are becoming clouds and deb olin unferth...first one is tender with great imagery and deb olin unferth just makes you feel good about yourself and makes me laugh...

Laura says

I enjoyed most of the stories, even if few of them really entranced me. I enjoyed Oates' story; but I love her. I think I'd like to read a Roddy Doyle book, after the taste we got in his short, *New Boy*. I also thought that *Hot Pink* by Adam Levin was really cool, a touch of Burgess in the colloquial prose. The final stand out to me was Yannick Murphy... I will be looking for her novels. I love that McSweeney's mails me stuff I may never have thought to read previous to their packages. :)

Sarah says

I like this issue a lot. It had some really good stuff and some really weird stuff. I think some of the weird stuff was written so the author could feel smarter than the reader. They failed, but it was still entertaining.

Sean says

This one looks to have been on my shelf for close to five years. Really, McSweeney's used to be good. This one is terrible. They seem to select stories based on how pretentious, affected and fake the voices of the writers are. I couldn't even finish half of these.

Clark says

This was my first McSweeney's and I thought it was a great place to start. There were some wonderful standouts like Chris Adrian's "The Stepfather" (a smartly written satire of the Bush presidency), Adam Levin's "Hot Pink", Joe Meno's "People are becoming clouds" and Joyce Carol Oates's "Bad Habits". Edmund White's "My Hustlers" was a real low point as it confused descriptions of an alternative sexual lifestyle with interesting story and Alan Ackerman's "No Cry of Distress in Our Streets" was almost completely incomprehensible. Other than those two, though, I was pretty impressed by most of the stories. An excellent collection.

Jaimie says

If you have, through some terrible oversight or tragic turn of events, never considered getting a subscription to McSweeney's Quarterly Concern, may I heartily suggest to you this very moment that it is more than a *merely good idea*, and that it is in fact (and not merely in verisimilitude) *one of the best ideas* you could ever have, -- even if you are suffering from yaws, which, rumor has it along the grapevine (as whispered in the avocado tree [as suggested amongst the flute-like staffs {staves?

This one has some good stories in it. I particularly remember one that I think was called "Hot Pink" or something like that. It was just about some guys walking around a city, it might have been Chicago. I remember someone carrying a bag of oranges. I obviously don't remember it "particularly" well, like I said. It was a good story, whatever it was called.
