



Raymond Carver: A Writer's Life

Carol Sklenicka

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The first biography of america's best-known short story writer of the late twentieth century.

The *London Times* called Raymond Carver "the American Chekhov." The beloved, mischievous, but more modest short-story writer and poet thought of himself as "a lucky man" whose renunciation of alcohol allowed him to live "ten years longer than I or anyone expected."

In that last decade, Carver became the leading figure in a resurgence of the short story. Readers embraced his precise, sad, often funny and poignant tales of ordinary people and their troubles: poverty, drunkenness, embittered marriages, difficulties brought on by neglect rather than intent. Since Carver died in 1988 at age fifty, his legacy has been mythologized by admirers and tainted by controversy over a zealous editor's shaping of his first two story collections.

Carol Sklenicka penetrates the myths and controversies. Her decade-long search of archives across the United States and her extensive interviews with Carver's relatives, friends, and colleagues have enabled her to write the definitive story of the iconic literary figure. Laced with the voices of people who knew Carver intimately, her biography offers a fresh appreciation of his work and an unbiased, vivid portrait of the writer.

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