

Pulitzer Prize for Fiction



The Pulitzer Prizes were awarded this week with the announcement that there will not be a fiction winner for 2012. This isn't the first time that there was no prize, but the announcement still comes as sort of a shock. Three finalists had already been announced, *Train Dreams* by Denis Johnson, *Swamplandia!* by Karen Russell, and *The Pale King* by the late David Foster Wallace.

While Sig Gissler, an administrator for the Pulitzer Prize awards says "it is not a statement about fiction in general -- just a statement about the process", Ann Patchett disagrees. Patchett who is an author, reader and book store owner, wrote an op-ed in the New York Times criticizing the lack of award. She argues that there were actually many deserving books this year and the excitement created for both readers and sellers of books is something that is desirable and necessary.

The entire op-ed piece is worth reading, and I admit to being a huge Ann Patchett fan. How can you not like an author who writes with such passion about fiction?

"Let me underscore the obvious here: Reading fiction is important. It is a vital means of imagining a life other than our own, which in turn makes us more empathetic beings. Following complex story lines stretches our brains beyond the 140 characters of sound-bite thinking, and staying within the world of a novel gives us the ability to be quiet and alone, two skills that are disappearing faster than the polar icecaps."

Posted by sbowman on April 18, 2012

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