



Later the Same Day

Grace Paley

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In the 17 short stories collected here, Paley writes with verbal economy and resonance, pithy insights, and warmth and humor. The themes are familiar: friendship, commitment, responsibility, love, political idealism and activism, children, the nuclear shadow.

Later the Same Day Details

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Author : Grace Paley

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From Reader Review Later the Same Day for online ebook

Northpapers says

"Hindsight, usually looked down upon, is probably as valuable as foresight, since it does include a few facts."

Grace Paley's third and final collection of short stories is an astounding third act. It's comic in the highest sense, taking the world in affectionately, returning to characters from earlier collections, moving seamlessly through a complicated life to find warmth.

The opening story, "Love," could act as a thesis for Paley's whole work in short fiction. In a few sparse pages, she reaches into a neighborhood, history, and resonant moments to characterize love. A pair of aging lovers recalls a life of breaks, stories, reconciliations, and departures. She aims at, and finds, a kind of truth that resides in the whole body, that is thought and narrative and judgment and humor.

Throughout the stories that follow, notably "Zagrowsky Tells," where her own stand-in, Faith, acts as something of an ambivalent antagonist to a racist old butcher who loves his black grandchild, she holds herself, her work in protest and poetry and neighboring, her parenting, her romances, and her aging up to the teasing light of love, and gives a warm account of all of it.

I'm not interested in imitating her voice, but her work would inspire any writer who loves a neighborhood and longs to speak well to a life there. Because of this, I count her as one of my heroes.

Kimberly Carson says

Grace Paley knows how to write sentences that give you fucking goosebumps.

"It's hard to stand behind a people and culture in revolutionary transition when you are constantly worried about their irreplaceable and breakable artifacts."

"The head comunard, a bourgeois leftover, says, Oh, what can ail thee, pail individualist?"

"Well, Jack, it was organized to discontinue the English language as a useful way to communicate exact facts."

Adam says

"I am trying to curb my cultivated individualism, which seemed for years so sweet. It was my own song in my own world and, of course, it may not be useful in the hard time to come."

Highlights: In the Garden; Somewhere Else; Friends; Anxiety; In This Country, But in Another Language, My Aunt Refuses to Marry the Men Everyone Wants Her To; Mother; The Story Hearer; Zagrowsky Tells.

Marica says

L'arte è lunga e la vita è breve

Grace Paley racconta la vita quotidiana che le scorre intorno, a New York. La narrazione è fluente e trascina con sé pensieri a ruota libera e conversazioni non virgolettate. I suoi personaggi sono le altre giovani madri incontrate ai giardini, figli, mariti, la gente dei gruppi pacifisti che frequentò a lungo da attivista convinta e poi le solite persone durante il trascorrere degli anni, che assistono, commentano, sostengono. Il suo sguardo sul mondo è realista, ma il risultato è tutt'altro che freddo e disperante: GP crede fortemente nell'amicizia e nella solidarietà e inoltre ha una grazia molto rara, attraverso la quale tutto quello che racconta sembra accettabile, anche gli eventi più tristi. Il tono è sottilmente umoristico e l'effetto molto gradevole. Oserei dire che nel complesso la lettura dei suoi racconti riconcilia col mondo, tale è la saggezza e la positività che emanano. Grace Paley ha scritto solo tre raccolte di racconti "perché l'arte è lunga e la vita è breve", in altre parole perché riteneva il suo impegno sociale e pacifista più importante della scrittura. Consiglio caldamente la lettura di GP, i suoi racconti si potrebbero vendere anche in farmacia nel reparto parafarmaco, con varie indicazioni: "combatte la sfiducia nel genere umano", oppure "rinfrescate il vostro sguardo sul mondo", "dedicato alle madri di figli adolescenti", "per passare senza danni morali dal primo al secondo marito". Il mio libro ha una bella introduzione di Fernanda Pivano, su wikipedia ho trovato un saggio molto interessante di un'ammiratrice d'eccezione, Carol Oates: <http://www.usfca.edu/jco/gracepaley/>

Barbaraw says

Oink Oink

Racconti molto disuguali, accomunati da una finezza di scrittura raramente incontrata.

Elittica, elitaria, esteta...Grace Paley non usa trucchi, immerge nel flusso del racconto, poco importa se salta frammenti di conversazione per buttarci nel finale, sorpresi; frammenta, taglia, non avverte il lettore, non prepara storie ad effetto. Scrive, sembra, come vive, in affanno tra molti impegni.

Ma sa fermarsi, quell'attimo, e dimenticare di essere Grace Paley, militante, impegnata, madre soprattutto, e cattura, come solo i grandi fotografi, un personaggio, un'atmosfera, una piega nascosta dell'esistenza che fluisce.

E' grande nella scrittura, piccola nelle storie, e ne viene fuori una buffa mescolanza di registri sfasati.

Ecco un inizio, travolgente:

E' un uomo di origine straniera che soffre ondate d'amore. Lacrime salate si sollevano in creste nei suoi occhi. Le sponde battute di queste onde sono spesso i suoi bambini.

Ma questa non è una storia sui suoi bambini.

Ne segue una bellissima, cortissima storia di invenzione di flipper - che copierei integralmente qui se non fosse la pigrizia - dalla quale può partire una lezione di estetica, di metafisica, di morale, a scelta.

Ma il mio preferito è "Ansietà", altro brevissimo racconto condensato. Un trattato di pedagogia, psicologia e umana tenerezza in due paginette...

Piantala, dice lui.

Oink oink, dice la bambina.

Che dici?

< Oink oink, dice lei.

Il giovane padre dice Che? tre volte. Poi afferra la figlia, la solleva in alto sopra la testa, e la mette violentemente in terra.

Un nulla, un nulla che viene notato da una signora al balcone, una Grace Paley che si sporge, che nota i dettagli, interviene, lieve, una virgola qui, niente virgola là, e cambia il senso del momento. Cambia anche, con le sue virgoline, la vita di un personaggio. Io sono rassicurata: la bambina potrà continuare a fare oink oink, Grace Paley ha saputo parlare.

Jimmy says

Enigmatic stories, not light but containing lightness. Very funny. A sympathetic humor. The short ones are very strange. Off-kilter occurrences following their own logic, sometimes reminds me of Jane Bowle's stories, but with broader concerns. Politics is in there a lot, the stories are more about the ways people deal with politics in their own lives, rather than trying to make any political points. I like her voice a lot, and she has recurring characters. Faith and her friends Ruth and Ann and Susan. She doesn't use quotation marks to set off dialogue and it can be really confusing when a lot of people start talking, but she does dialogue well, and her stories are sometimes hard to follow but they go in these weird directions without any kind of explanation. I like that. I also like, in her shorter stories, where she doesn't try for any kind of realism. Like in "At That Time, or The History of a Joke".

Betsy says

If I had discovered Grace Paley before she died, I might have stalked her around her neighborhood in NYC to ask her for just a moment of her time. I love her writing. Not all of the stories in this collection are great, but there are enough good ones to make me lose all objectivity.

Larry Bassett says

This was the book in which I met Grace Paley first in real time. That is, I first read parts of this book, in the same time it was actually written. But now all of her short story books are in the equally distant past. It is years later. *Later the Same Day* was first published in 1985 when I was a fulltime peace activist. Grace Paley was also a peace activist but she took out time to write. Many of these short stories are four pages or less in length. At slightly more than two hundred pages, it is a small book in its original hard and soft cover editions. Easy to pick up and read if you can find a used copy.

As I have made a habit with the three short story collections, I am quoting brief passages from a number of the GR reviews that give a good sense of what you will find in this book. While it may not be the best way to review a book, I think it works for me with Grace.

This book is a collection of short fiction. A core of female characters appears and reappears in several of them. Though they're more of my mother's generation than mine, I'm sure I've been on picket lines with all of them. Their activism, however, is not the point of the stories - it's

just part of the air they breathe. The stories are about life, love, relationships, aging, betrayal, loyalty.

...

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...

Grace Paley writes about great pain and huge questions in the small, almost claustrophobic world of women and children in a patriarchal and capitalistic culture. Even though I was a young wife and mother in a completely different decade and era, from a different culture, Grace's writing tells stories I recognize intimately.

...

Later the Same Day does what Paley does best. It's beautiful stories crafted around strong, independent women who don't take crap from anyone. Or if they do, they have reasons for it.

...

grace paley is just a glorious writer. her dialogue just jumps off the page, does an awkward little dance [though a dance we have all seen, and most have done:], and comes to life. sometimes it wears a top hat and sometimes galoshes. sometimes at the same time.

...

One of the most accomplished and most surprising short story writers of all time. A classic. Anyone who wants to know how to write dialogue should read Grace Paley.

I love Grace Paley. She is a hoot and a wise owl and probably sometimes a curmudgeon by the time she was writing these stories. She will always get five stars from me. Of her three collections of short stories, this final collection has the most leftwing political allusions by far and is, as a result, the most enjoyable to me.

I read this collection of short stories as a part of Grace Paley's book *The Collected Stories* . I am delighted to get Paley's three short story collections all in one binding.

Cheryl says

A few hot human truthful words are powerful enough...

Reading Paley's collection is like having a conversation with someone who gets to the point in a few words, and I can appreciate a woman of necessary words. It's not too often that you come across a short story collection and you're immediately stunned by the singularity of voice and style. I had to comb through some of these stories again, wondering what it was that made me feel as though I could hear the characters' voices somewhere other than in the recesses of my reader's mind. Even though I had been familiar with Paley's literature-class-favorite *Mother* and some of her poems, I wasn't prepared for the profundity of the denouement (or the lack of) within her stories. The wonderment of these stories are found within the pizzazz of the word arrangement, the flow of the dialogue that makes no use of quotation marks, the subtlety of language, and the various perspectives.

Some of these stories are so short, they could be poems - this I found fascinating. I really enjoyed the brevity of her shorter shorts like "Love," "In The Garden," "At That Time, or the History of a Joke," and of course, "Mother." In these stories, the mystery of life is paralleled through story structure and conversational tones, and a lot of meaning is delivered with few embellishments.

Some of the longer stories with their slew of characters didn't resonate with me, with the exception of "Zagrowsky Tells," a story about a man who doesn't know how to live with people of a different race, until his mentally unstable daughter bears a biracial grandson for him to raise. The way Paley handles sensitive race issues in this story is instructive and appealing to any reader. What is really catchy, however, is the 'voice' and style she applies to her story that makes them so distinctive - after you've read a Paley story once, you won't have to look for the author's name again when you do revisit another of her works, because her writing is that unique. This, I find alluring. So in Grace Paley style, I will leave you with a succinct review of hopefully, only the necessary words.

Sara Marcus says

one of my all-time favorites, and a major, major reason that i started trying to write stories. i pulled this out yesterday after hearing that she had moved on, stayed up late with her casual scenes in which the desire to end war coexists in these characters' lush, raucous hearts with the desire to take care of children or to be happy in love. nobody did it like she did--wrapped these drives all together in human lives, heard people's magnificently individual voices. i miss her so much.

Linda Hart says

This is a small book of poignant short stories populated with independent strong women and their relationships. Her writing style is precise. She uses few words in a clever and effective way. She does not use conventional punctuation, which drove me crazy at first, but once I caught on to her style I found it fitting. Her characters are uniquely believable, the dialogues wonderful, and the subjects addressed important. She is disdainfully humorous and there are some great one liners.

Here is a quote from GR reader Sarah Hilary that nicely sums up my feelings about Grace Paley (her complete review found here <http://www.theshortreview.com/reviews/GracePaleyTheCollectedStories.htm>):

"Skim-read Paley's stories and you may end up trying to convince yourself she's at fault for being too political, or for giving us only glimpses of her characters, or for flaunting the rules of story-telling. But if you're prepared to meet the author midway, to revel in her mischievous sense of purpose, to take a dive face-first into real lives that may not be explained or described in any traditional manner – grab this collection. Chances are your brain will thank you for the spring-clean."

Grace Paley (1922-2007), a postmodernist writer, taught creative writing at Sarah Lawrence College in New York.

I actually liked her writing so much I purchased the posthumous 1994 National Book Award Finalist for Fiction, The Collected Stories.
Highly recommend.

Cosimo says

We can be responsible

“La gente vuole *veramente* essere giovane e bella. Quando si incontrano per strada, maschi o femmine, se stanno invecchiando si guardano un po' vergognosi. E' chiaro che vorrebbero dire, Scusami, non intendevo attirare l'attenzione su mortalità e gravità contemporaneamente. Non volevo ricordarti, mio caro amico, il prossimo sfratto che subiremo, prima dalla vitalità, poi dalla vita. Al che, il più delle volte, gli occhi dell'amico cortesemente replicheranno, Mio caro, non è nulla, quasi non si nota”.

Attivista e pacifista, scrittrice e militante, figura femminile di carattere ribelle e personalità dissidente, Grace Paley ci offre racconti intensi e ironici, raccontando la New York intellettuale e migratoria, egualitaria e cosmopolita, sempre con uno spirito indomito e saggio, che sorride alla tradizione e si oppone alla passività. Paley trova per le sue protagoniste una felicità preziosa nelle piccole delusioni, un conforto sincero nell'estraniante dolore. La Paley apre l'intreccio narrativo all'imprevedibilità e alla non linearità, con una poetica aderente alle incongruenze del vivere e ai cortocircuiti del moderno, sia sul piano emotivo che su quello materiale. Le donne della Paley seguono la speranza, la sorpresa, la possibilità: *“qualsiasi personaggio, vero o inventato, si merita un destino aperto nella vita”*. La modalità di scrittura della Paley costruisce una *koiné* popolare della classe media e lavoratrice, progressista e illuminista, che non vuole occupare uno spazio, ma durare nel tempo, con un impasto linguistico ibrido che rimanda alle radici *yiddish* e ucraine trasformate da Ellis Island e dal Lower East Side e il Bronx. Non a caso il suo alter-ego si chiama Faith Darwin. Le donne di Paley hanno un'urgenza morale di sopravvivenza e sovversione e coniugano lo spirito anticonformista con le abilità del quotidiano; la creatività transita da casa alla strada, dal livello domestico a quello civile, dove sono sempre gli affetti profondi e le passioni inesauribili a inventare le parole e determinare il senso, a cogliere il balbettare di chi è fuori dalla cronaca. Il discorso è conciso e puro, tende all'interruzione, all'allusione, al farsi avanti di voci singolari tra scarti e accelerazioni. A volte digressivo e a volte dialogico, descrive l'universo interpersonale come sempre in evoluzione, in divenire, inclusivo all'interno di una comunità di madri, single, amanti, amiche, donne che si prendono cura dell'altro, delicate e battagliere che crescono e invecchiano in una solitudine che condivide l'esperienza espressiva e il desiderio di raccontare. Centrale nella Paley l'arte dell'ascolto, l'antitesi al silenzio che nega la parola; che si fa poi artigianato narrativo, manifattura verbale ad alta elaborazione formale, rendendo le storie specifiche e insieme universali.

“Che cosa crea un brano di narrativa? La narrativa e? fatta da qualcuno che mi racconta una storia. Un bambino torna da scuola e mi dice ‘Mamma! Ti devo raccontare una cosa!’ Ecco il primo impulso di un piccolo *storyteller*”.

Katherine says

“He had often thought of the way wide air lives and moves in a man's chest. Then it's strummed into shape by the short-stringed voice box to become a wonderful secondary sexual characteristic” (12).

“That's because I was once a pure-thinking English major—but alas, I was forced by bad management, the thoughtless begetting of children, and the vengeance of alimony into low practicality” (14).

“...she listens like a disease. She's a natural editor. It goes in her ear one day. In a week you see it without

complications, no mistakes, on paper” (17-18).

“Every August is the anniversary of don’t remind me” (23).

“It’s a terrible thing to die young. Still, it saves a lot of time” (24).

“Never married. I think if you live together so many years it’s almost equally legal as if the rabbi himself lassooed you together with June roses. Still, the problem is thorny like the rose itself” (30).

“Instead, tears made their usual protective lenses for the safe observation of misery” (36).

“We hoped we were not about to suffer socialist injustice, because we loved socialism” (48).

“Had I simply gone to the store without thinking, the word ‘comestible’ would never have occurred to me. I would have imagined—hungry supper nighttime Jack greens cheese store walk street.

“But I do like this language—wheat and chaff—with its widening pool of foreign genes, and since I never have had any occasion to say ‘comestible,’ it was pleasurable to think it” (135).

“That’s how I found out what I was saving up my money for” (163).

“She says, No. None of them liked it. Not one. They only put up with it because it wasn’t time yet in history to holler” (165).

“...this is how my wife talked to her, like she was made of gold—or eggshells” (170).

“He wished he had a new dog or a new child or a new wife. He had none of these things because he only thought about them once in ten days and then only for about five minutes” (181).

“My God, said Jack, you’ve never mentioned Greek gods in bed before. No occasion, I said” (206).

*I enjoyed a lot of her language, but the stories themselves failed to interest me much.

Jan says

What a unique voice. I've enjoyed this read very much.

Mary Lou says

How have I lived in this world and not known about the writing of this woman??? This book is a collection of short fiction. A core of female characters appears and reappears in several of them. Though they’re more of my mother’s generation than mine, I’m sure I’ve been on picket lines with all of them. Their activism, however, is not the point of the stories - it’s just part of the air they breathe. The stories are about life, love, relationships, aging, betrayal, loyalty. Paley gives voice to a more varied cast of characters as well.

“Lavinia:An Old Story” is told in the voice of a believably black woman who mourns the fact that her daughter, though “born in good cheer”, has lived a life almost exactly like her mother’s. Many of the stories are, quite self-consciously, about how we make stories and how stories make us. In “Ruth and Edie”, Ruth is thinking about her granddaughter’s manipulation of people and language - “... Gramma, I boke your cup. Remember dat? In this simple way the lifelong past is invented, which, as we know, thickens the present and gives all kinds of advice to the future.” They’re also about inevitability - same story: “... - Letty, rosy and soft-cheeked as ever, was falling, already falling, falling out of her brand-new hammock of world-inventing words onto the hard floor of man-made time.” The language is spare, poetic - commenting on a hurtful discussion between a man and a woman in “Listening”: “Silence - the space that follows unkindness in which little truths growl.”
