

10 August 2009

Good Afternoon—

I have always held Cormac McCarthy's *The Crossing* in company with his other "big" books—*Suttree*, *Blood Meridian*—ones in which such wealth of physical detail and mesmerizing language exist that a reader ends them with a bewildering kaleidoscope of memories.

He's got tighter books, but the first part of *The Crossing* is as perfect as anything he's done, even *Child of God*.

Of his novels, it's my sentimental favorite. I like its tone.

I'd found out more about *Suttree* by looking at the contents of its divisions. I thought I'd look in a similar fashion at *The Crossing*'s "contents." But in *The Crossing* divisions don't average into headings. Its long stories would make headings, but Billy's day- and night-time dreams would be lost.

So, what's here may seem relatively more "trees than forest," but its page-by-page touchstone-detail seems pretty good at jogging the memory. Which is to say, read the novel, then the "Contents" here. Or, read what's here to see if you might want to read the novel. I say try it.

Interestingly, I've found that in the novel's first few pages Boyd rides on Billy's travois carrying wood back to the house, and that, very late, Billy carries Boyd's bones on a travois north out of Mexico. More bookending. How unexpected. Could be something to the thought. Hard to say.

Take care,

All Best,
John Sepich.