ENG104: WEEKLY READING AND WRITING #8

Tuesday
Raymond Carver
headnote: page 167 – 8

*What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* page 187

“On Writing,” p 1577; “Creative Writing,” p 1582

“A Reading of Love” by Saltzman, p 1593

Thursday

*Cathedral* page 168

“Looking for Raymond Carver,” by Scott, p 1595

“The Origin of Cathedral” page 1592

Weekly Writing #8 Directions: Choose two questions from the following, one in response to *Love* and one to *Cathedral*. For each question, develop your response in a focused paragraph. Use details, specifics, examples, and quotes from the story to develop your response.

Richard Ford on Raymond Carver: “One learned from the story many things: Life was this way – yes we already knew that. But this life, these otherwise unnoticeable people’s suitability for literary expression seemed new. One also felt that a consequence of the story was seemingly to intensify life, even dignify it, and to locate in it shadowed corners and niches that needed revealing so that we readers could practice life better ourselves. And yet the story itself, in its spare, self conscious intensity, was such a made thing, not like life at all; it was a piece of nearly abstract artistic construction calculated to produce almost giddy pleasure.”


Carver’s *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*

- **Setting:** What changes in the setting can you identify over the course of the story? In what way does the setting mirror Carver’s message about the stages of love?
- **Interpretation:** Consider details of plot, character, setting, and point-of-view (be specific and use these details for support) as you determine your own interpretation of an overall meaning for this story. Don’t be concerned with what you think Carver might have intended; rather, develop your own meaning.
- **Join In:** What might you have offered to the discussion if you had been sitting at the table? Write yourself into this story by recreating a scene that includes you at the table. To do this successfully, you’ll need to imitate Carver’s minimalist style.

Carver’s *Cathedral*

- **Create:** Why a cathedral as the catalyst for the narrator’s learning experience? What added dimension does this symbol bring to our understanding of the story? Consider this question, as you write a scene with another kind of activity, another kind of catalyst.
- **Comparative Analysis:** In the headnote to Carver’s stories, your editor writes that *Love* represents the “hard-edged minimalist style of Carver’s middle period.” In his final period, “Carver developed a more expansive style,” as represented by *Cathedral*. Compare the two stories in whatever focused way (e.g. use of narrator/point-of-view, characters, worldview, style and tone, issues, themes) you would like.
- **Character / Connection:** Our narrator experiences change – dwell on this change and write about your own change/discovery in either a prose or a fictional account.