

Yellow Back Radio Broke-Down (American Literature (Dalkey Archive))

By Ishmael Reed



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"Folks. This here is the story of the Loop Garoo Kid. A cowboy so bad he made a working posse of spells phone in sick. A bullwhacker so unfeeling he left the print of winged mice on hides of crawling women. A desperado so onery he made the Pope cry and the most powerful of cattlemen shed his head to the Executioner's swine."

And so begins the HooDoo Western by Ishmael Reed, author of Mumbo Jumbo and one of America's most innovative and celebrated writers. Reed demolishes white American history and folklore as well as Christian myth in this masterful satire of contemporary American life.

In addition to the black, satanic Loop Garoo Kid, Yellow Back Radio Broke-Down features Drag Gibson (a rich, slovenly cattleman), Mustache Sal (his nymphomaniac mail-order bride), Thomas Jefferson and many others in a hilarious parody of the old Western.



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Yellow Back Radio Broke-Down (American Literature (Dalkey Archive)) By Ishmael Reed Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

In this duo from 1974 and 1969, respectively, Reed takes on two great American genresDthe private detective story and the Western. A satiric look at 1960s politics, Louisiana Red follows private eye Papa LaBas as he investigates the murder of the owner of a gumbo joint. Yellow Back is more of a parody of a Western than a true white hat/black hat shoot-'em-up; it is presented in an unusual style with characters such as the outlaw the Loop Garoo Kid and nympho mail-order bride Mustache Sal. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Review

"Literary surrealism has invaded Marlboro Country . . . Reed skins all our sacred cows. He scalps every hero who wanders by. He turns the American West into a ribald hell where iron-jawed hogs eat people, the devil swings like a hopped-up defrocked padre, and the great emissaries of Christian doctrine behave like a purple-robed Mafia. Ishmael Reed has mastered the vocabulary of blasphemy." (Life)

"Ishmael Reed is a most talented humorist and possessor of a powerfully antic and lyric imagination . . . Yellow Back Radio Broke-Down should be read as hard evidence of Reed's uncommon talent." (New Yorker)

"Swings with the poetry of slang, bop talk and a solo scat singer traversing 47 miles of barbed wire with a cobra snake for a necktie." (Rolling Stone)

"Yellow Back Radio Broke-Down is a traditional revenge Western shot full of holes and stood on its head. Mr. Reed narrates this perversely wacky story in machine-gun bursts of loose-jointed, irreverent prose, occasionally tinged with good-natured obscenity. The effect is precisely as if a bunch of black kids at Lincoln Center had raided the costume room, dressed up as Thomas Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, Lyndon Johnson and the Pope, and improvised *How the West Was Won* for skit night." (New York Times)

"A wild and wicked burlesque and free-wheeling fantasy... The American scene, past and present, with all its inconsistencies and white vanity, takes it on the chin and so does Christianity, for the Loop Garoo Kid, it turns out, is not only a black superman, but the devil incarnate—and he's a-winnin' out." (Publishers Weekly)

"Yellow Back Radio Broke-Down is a full blown 'horse opera,' a surrealistic spoof of the Western with Indian chiefs aboard helicopters, stagecoaches and closed circuit TVs, cavalry charges of taxis." (New York Review of Books)

About the Author

Ishmael Reed is the author of over twenty-five books including Mumbo Jumbo, The Last Days of Louisiana Red, Yellow Back Radio Broke-Down and Juice!. He is also a publisher, television producer, songwriter, radio and television commentator, lecturer, and has long been devoted to exploring an alternative black aesthetic: the trickster tradition, or Neo-Hoodooism as he calls it. Founder of the Before Columbus Foundation, he taught at the University of California, Berkeley for over thirty years, retiring in 2005. In 2003, he received the coveted Otto Award for political theater.

Users Review

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