

Big world essay sample



I had Cathedral in my bag, intending to read Carver's A Small, Good Thing. At lunchtime I decided to borrow from the library, Beginners – the recently-published book of Carver's unedited What We Talk About When We Talk About Love stories – so I could compare the three versions. Though the catalogue said there was one on the shelf at Customs House, it couldn't be found. The librarian ordered another copy from Surry Hills to be sent for me to collect from Town Hall. On the way back to work I stopped at Ashwoods and bought Tim Winton's book, The Turning (and a Weezer CD) for \$5. I started reading the first story, Big World, on the train home. Which is how I ended up reading Winton instead of Carver. I enjoyed the story until this last paragraph:

Right then I can't imagine an end to the quiet. The horizon fades. Everything looks impossibly far off. In two hours I'll hear Biggie and Meg in his sleeping bag and she'll cry out like a bird and become so beautiful, so desirable in the total dark that I'll begin to cry. In a week Biggie and Meg will blow me off in Broome and I'll be on the bus south for a second chance at the exams. In a year Biggie will be dead in a mining accident in the Pilbara and I'll be reading Robert Louis Stevenson at this funeral while his relatives shuffle and mutter with contempt. Meg won't show. I'll grow up and have a family of my own and see Briony Nevis, tired and lined in a supermarket queue, and wonder what all the fuss was about. And one night I'll turn on the TV to discover the fact that Tony Macoli, the little man with the nose that could sniff round corner, is Australia's richest merchant banker. All of it unimaginable. Right now, standing with Biggie on the salt lake at sunset, each of us still in our southern-boy uniform of boots, jeans and flannel shirt, I don't care what

happens beyond this moment. In the hot northern dusk, the world suddenly gets big around us, so big we just give in and watch.

This moment of innocence is poignant because we're told it's going to end, and end soon. For most of the story the narration feels contemporaneous to the action, but in this last paragraph Winton's nameless narrator is suddenly able to see into the future, and it feels like a cheat. The Turning is described as a book of interlinked short stories. I wonder if these character reappear.