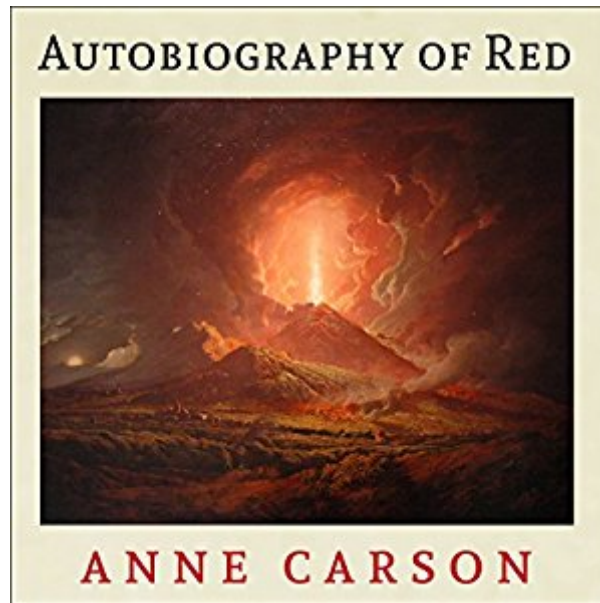




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# Autobiography Of Red: Vintage Contemporaries Series



## Synopsis

The award-winning poet Anne Carson reinvents a genre in *Autobiography of Red*, a stunning work that is both a novel and a poem, both an unconventional recreation of an ancient Greek myth and a wholly original coming-of-age story set in the present. Geryon, a young boy who is also a winged red monster, reveals the volcanic terrain of his fragile, tormented soul in an autobiography he begins at the age of five. As he grows older, Geryon escapes his abusive brother and affectionate but ineffectual mother, finding solace behind the lens of his camera and in the arms of a young man named Herakles, a cavalier drifter who leaves him at the peak of infatuation. When Herakles reappears years later, Geryon confronts again the pain of his desire and embarks on a journey that will unleash his creative imagination to its fullest extent. By turns whimsical and haunting, erudite and accessible, richly layered and deceptively simple, *Autobiography of Red* is a profoundly moving portrait of an artist coming to terms with the fantastic accident of who he is.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

It must be a question of perspective. For me, it's as if I am standing outside a window looking in, and as I read, it is from the perspective of a mother of sons. Certain pieces linger -- Geryon's observation of stones at the beginning of the story- Carson has a unique ability to capture through mere glimpses the honesty and beauty of a child's understanding of his relationship to the world around him, trust in his brother because that's how the world should work in the mind of a 5 year old child; Geryon and his mother enjoying their Tuesday night routine- Geryon's mother's appreciation and validation of his sculpture autobiography; and perhaps what still pulls at my heart is what

Carson was able to convey in the baby-sitting chapter- Geryon's retreat when his mother leaves and his springing to life with her return. As I read the novel, I had to force myself not to judge, but to observe; it was easier the second time through. Still, my heart aches for Geryon, and his vulnerability. Carson beautifully captures Geryon's plight "outside and inside." My chest still tightens as I recall Geryon's struggle as he is left to fend for himself, first by his brother's apathy, then by his brother's violence, the cruelty of love lost, and finally the cost of his freedom. "Who can a monster blame for being red?" My heart aches for Geryon as he searches for meaning and an understanding of the distance between himself and the ones he loves, and his place in time and space. Alice Munro captured the sentiment best: "this book is amazing -- I haven't discovered any writing in years so marvelously disturbing."

Such a mystical, strange, and wonderful book of poetry. Anne Carson is definitely one of my favorites because of this work.

Anne Carson is a master of experimental narrative poetry. And *Autobiography of Red* is her masterpiece. I've never read another novel in verse that floored me the way this one has. I've lost count how many times I've read it. Each reading delights my senses more than the first reading. Hard to believe but true! Her simple experimental structure is deceptively complex. Like all masterpieces, this one continues to unravel like the layers of an onion. It's absolute perfection. That's really all you can say about it. It. Is. Perfect.

I have gotten so much out of this little book of fantastic poems... it has completely reinvented the way I think of poetry. Anne Carson speaks truth, but in such a way that it feels like the first time you heard those ideas.

This is the best book written in the English language.

Indeed a different story. I found this short book impossible to put down and the play on words made is a "read it again" story. A breath of life into an old story with a different view, it takes the "other" path. Worthy Read!!!

One of the most moving, heartbreaking, and impressive works I have read, especially given how

short it is. Surprising, smart and highly original. Carson is definitely one of the most brilliant writers I've come across.

Carson is a beautiful poet, and perfectly balances the narrative requirements of a novel with the evocative power of poetry. The book claims to retell the story of an Ancient Greek myth, put into modern day. However, that is just a conceit. The story is really focused on a narrative of growing up, of being different, gaining and losing love. It is heartbreaking and beautiful, like a dream.

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