

Student Example of a Book Review

Carver's short stories have so many qualities not found in most I've read, things like odd humor and random situations. The first story I read was "The Bath." It opens normally, portraying an ordinary American family preparing for a child's birthday. All seems well until the child is struck by a car, and the boy's friend can't decide whether to finish a bag of chips or continue to school. I found this odd at first and then couldn't help but laugh at the situation. This kind of deadpan humor repeats itself throughout most of his stories.

—*Matthew Merritt*

Professional review excerpt

Matthew's opinions are reinforced by the commentary of reviewer David Gates, in his *Newsweek* (June 6, 1988) review "Carver: To Make A Long Story Short":

Believers in a grim minimalist Carver miss the fun of such comic figures as the fat restaurant customer who speaks in the royal "we," the blind, bearded house guest who calls people "Bub," his uncomfortable host ("A beard on a blind man! Too much I say") and the old woman who natters on like a Beckett character about wanting a clock radio. Other readers see these people only as grotesques and miss their basic decency (70).

This example is taken from the book *Raymond Carver in the Classroom: "A Small, Good Thing"*. (Rubenstein. NCTE, 2005): pp. 100–101.