

A Few Words on *The Abstract*

There I was scoping out the Brooklyn Book Fair, when I passed an empty table. Curiosity got the better of me, Goodloe Byron was hawking his book and there were none left. I congratulated him on his success; he informed me they were free. Free? I said with raised eyebrow. Curiosity was replaced by suspicion. My socialist instincts of fair pay for labor struggled with my anarchistic side that applauded his gratis dissemination of thought to the populace. But this was a book, not an old fashioned pamphlet or a copy machine stapled zine or a contemporary blog. Was he a philanthropist or did he just enjoy working as a secretary?

I thought Goodloe Byron an interesting nom de plume. A play on a Byronic lyrical tendency in his work as well as a reference to the 19th century British novel? Alas, no, it was truly his birth name. Perhaps his parents envisioned his life as a writer? No again, they were both merely family names. I told the young Byron he revealed too much. Allow us the mystery - or the romance, at least, that his name conjured up.

As you can see, I had many questions.

When my book arrived in the mail (true to his word, Goodloe sent me a copy. Free book and free postage), I carefully unwrapped it. Looked like a book, weighed like a book (that was significant postage he paid, too), opened it up and it was even printed like a book.

I began to read.

The protagonist is a lost alienated soul in a non-specific urban place who never seems to get too far from his hotel room or respond much to human overtures, I entered the world of a disturbed young man, either an American in a foreign land or a foreigner in America. A Freudian psychological thriller? An American take on *Notes from Underground's* existentialist quandaries? A male version of *The Golden Notebook's* exploration of a descent into madness? A Kafkaesque journey of a stranger in a strange land?

I read on. And so should you.

Now, dear reader, you are the proud owner of the second new and improved (at least when it comes to cover illustration) annotated version of this novelistic/publishing experiment. Goodloe, it seems, has "sold out" the first printing (can you sell out something that is given away?) and decided to embark on a second run. I feel privileged that he asked me to write these introductory remarks for it.

Has Goodloe become addicted to traipsing around the country to book fairs? Does he enjoy being in debt? Is he doing his best to avoid writing another book?

As you can see, I still have many questions.

Maddy Rosenberg
New York/ Berlin