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*Dallas Stories* by Marshall Terry (review)

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*Dallas Stories*. By Marshall Terry. (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1987. 153 pages, \$17.95/\$8.95.)

These are Dallas stories all right, but don't expect A. C. Greene (struck down by time and fate) or Bill Porterfield (who keeps getting himself fired). Marshall Terry is such a likable writer, agreeing with so many of your own opinions of Dallas characters, that you want to give him an A plus. But what about the *art* of writing? Well, he *does* have superb opening sentences ("Actually she was more promiscuous before marriage than after").

Women may be Terry's weakness (in fiction); even when beautiful youths, they only have mental sex with various men ("... she'd had them in her mind"), as in two arresting stories, "The Wind" and "The Horror." Bettian, a round if strange character, finds old age "made her want to scream" as she plays in the wind; the more interesting static heroine in "The Horror" finds age to be the horror of Conrad, in a diamond-in-the-rough story dripping with literary allusions. "The Grass" has an unforgettable woman character in a realistic, moving story.

If outsiders don't understand Dallas men, there are superfluous notes included to explain "The Prince of Dallas" and "The Silvering of Trees." Terry is ever the teacher. His excellent male character study in "Whatever Happened to Danny McBride" is his most original. Conclusion: if you want Texana plus memorable artistry, check out Walter McDonald.

JAMES W. BYRD

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*Platte River Road Narratives. A Descriptive Bibliography of Travel over the Great Central Route to Oregon, California, Utah, Colorado, Montana, and Other Western States and Territories, 1812-1866.* By Merrill J. Mattes. With a foreword by James A. Michener. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988. 632 pages, \$95.00.)

Merrill J. Mattes identifies, describes, and evaluates in this work more than 2,000 overland accounts—diaries, journals, letters, recollections—by travelers along the Platte River between 1812 and the beginning of the railroad era. His book is exhaustively researched, thoughtfully arranged, meticulously detailed. It will join Mattes' narrative history *The Great Platte River Road* (1969) as one of the premier accomplishments in modern western studies.

The introductory section includes a "Historical Overview" in which the compiler deftly relates the varying numbers and destinations of Platte River travelers from year to year to changing national and international circumstances. A briefer "Geographical Overview" follows, concerned with the confusing proliferation of place-names during the nineteenth century that now