




Lightning Song

Lewis Nordan

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Leroy Dearman is twelve, and he lives on a llama farm in Mississippi. Life is perfect. It's true that his grandfather just died in the attic and that wild dogs kill a baby llama now and then, and it's true that one little sister curses him and the other one wets her pants. But up to the day Uncle Harris moves in, life looks like it's right out of a Walt Disney movie. No wonder the llamas greet each morning with a song. Uncle Harris arrives in a sports car, full of funny stories and new ideas. He manages to persuade Leroy's straitlaced parents to join him for cocktails in the evening. He sets up a pretty grand bachelor pad in the Dearman attic, with a telephone, a TV set, and a stack of Playboy magazines. He is, you might say, Romance itself. Once Uncle Harris moves in, life on the llama farm takes on an entirely different flavor. Leroy discovers those magazines. Electricity fills the Dearman house. Equilibrium tilts, conversation trails off, the atmospheric pressure twists--and lightning strikes. Leroy starts seeing things he's never seen before, like the very gifted baton-twirling teacher, and his world changes forever. Not since PORTNOY'S COMPLAINT has a novel looked so directly, hilariously, and bittersweetly at the heartbreak of puberty.

Lightning Song Details

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Author : Lewis Nordan

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From Reader Review Lightning Song for online ebook

Pamela says

I have been amazed and entertained by the two previous Nordan books I've read (The Sharpshooter Blues and Wolf Whistle). This one, no. I didn't finish it and won't be going back to it.

The problem wasn't so much that what I read of it lacked the humor and pathos of the other books--although it did. It wasn't so much that it lacked the depth of the others--although it did.

The problem was that it messed up the history on a very important point. There is an entire section dealing with how the mother in the book becomes smitten by the story of the kidnapping of Aldo Moro (Italian Prime Minister). A quick peek at Wikipedia shows that Moro was kidnapped on 16 March 1978 and his body was found on 9 May 1978. During this time, not only was the main character, a twelve year old boy, *not* in school, it was *freakin' summer* as far as the book was concerned. Summer? In March?

My rule is that if an author doesn't care enough about his/her work to do the research, then this reader doesn't care enough to read the book!

Dave Allen says

Brief, strange, feverish, fantastical. In the vein of American magical realism, with a borrowed element from To Kill a Mockingbird that makes the whole thing seem like a parallel South universe. Punctuated by long, digressive monologues, with one surreal scene at the center of the book that, structurally, centers and concentrates the dollops of strangeness intruding on the proceedings on either side. In the varied glimpses of sex, longing and confusion as experienced by various characters, the whole thing reflects the unknowableness of parents to their children, and vice versa. I read Wolf Whistle by this author during college and have returned to it, awed and grateful, over the years, but this one seems lighter, more glancing and ephemeral, less immediately resonant and less globally tragic than WW. Still, I was glad to wade into Nordan's weird currents once again, and I want to read more of his.

Melody says

I will be reading more Mr. Nordan.

Joan MacLennan Mahon says

I miss Buddy. I hear him in his books. Loved it.

David says

This is a different one for Nordan. Not that it is any less developed a story, but it doesn't have quite the same

comic tone that the Arrow Catcher (or related) stories have. This book seems to have a darker core. Still hopeful in nature, but not exactly as comic. Still imaginative, detailed, and wonderful. As always, Nordan does not disappoint.

Melki says

"You are the oddest child."

Leroy Dearman's mother

Twelve-year-old Leroy is having a mostly idyllic summer. He enjoys nature and the llamas that live on his family's farm. He walks to the store with his younger sisters and the owner gives them free candy. His world is peopled with colorful characters like Screamer McGee who can lick his own penis, and the New People who like to play dress-up and speak with strange accents.

School is out and life is good.

Too bad it's all about to change with the arrival of Uncle Harris. On the run from his wife, Harris moves into the attic and nothing will ever be the same again.

Before Harris's arrival, sex had been little more than a baffling concept to Leroy, but now there is a stack of *Playboy* magazines upstairs, beckoning him to take a closer look.

Well, what do you know, he couldn't believe his eyes, here was somebody he recognized. It was another picture of the same woman he had seen on the front cover, that poor girl. What had she done with her vest? She'd lost her vest! And where were her pants, for God's sake? What had she done with her pants?

The reality of sex turns out to be even more disturbing than the nudity depicted in those glossy pages. Soon his mother is flirting shamelessly with Uncle Harris. His father may be in love with another woman, and Leroy himself is experiencing weird feelings for a bewitching baton twirler.

This stormy Mississippi summer will leave Leroy gasping for breath and struggling to understand the strange behaviors of the adults around him.

He was driven for the first time in his life to consider the death of his sisters, and his own death. He stood at the beginning of knowing such things, knowing that the means by which he was accustomed to comprehending the world were merely inadequate to the extreme.

Nordan has a very meandering style that some readers may not care for, but on the whole, this is a wonderful read that manages to be both hilarious and heartbreaking.

Tracy says

Just reread this and it's still perfect.

Fussnik says

great funny writing. a slow pace but it bubbles along. a great gumbo. couldn't stop reading. love this writer.

Geoff says

Can't say as I liked the story, I am not even sure that I even liked the way it was presented, but there was this something, just enough of a something for me to want to give this book four stars. Most I can come up with is that I became invested in it, I wanted badly enough to know what happened that I knocked it off in seven days. Now I know there are many of you saying "SEVEN DAYS? What did he do read it or write it?" But you should know that I have difficulties with *dyslexia*. Well at I believe I have trouble with dyslexia, and if I think I have trouble with dyslexia, then I have trouble with dyslexia. Which interestingly enough reminds me of something meaningful that happens in this book; to Leroy's mom, Uncle Harris looks good. And if Mrs. Dearman thinks he looks good, then he is good ... until she believes he isn't.

John Parisi says

Moving book , great characters,well written, intelligent. This is the first of many of his I will read.

Patty says

This was different..... I don't regret reading it.

Nicole says

In search of new authors I was directed to Lewis Nordan. Not my normal type of fiction but an excellent, visceral writer. Interested in reading more of his work.

Bonnie Jeanne says

Lightning Song by Lewis Nordan (1998)

Eric says

This was one of those hard to put down novels for me. Super funny dark humor but light hearted at the same time. I will surely read more of Nordan.
