



## It Feels So Good When I Stop

*Joe Pernice*

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### **It Feels So Good When I Stop** Joe Pernice

The hilarious and irreverent debut novel about a modern Everyman struggling to learn how to love, choose, and commit on his own terms, from the highly acclaimed singer and songwriter.

From the first moment he met Jocelyn, he knew he would marry her or destroy his life trying. He didn't count on being the lucky bastard that got to do both.

It's October 1996 in Cape Cod. Our hero- a narrator so ordinary that he remains nameless -is a talented but floundering musician-turnedwaiter who has hightailed it out of a volatile day-old marriage in New York and further into his own ever-deepening mess. With no job, no apartment, no wife, and a six pack of beer, he's looking for a clean slate. For years he's been dodging life's extremes, stuck somewhere between responsibility and freedom, love and obsession, obligation and desire, apathy and success. Now he's seeking sanctuary at the home that his sister abandoned, along with her marriage, so that he can sort out something in his life-what, he's not quite sure.

Looking for distraction from his memories of the hot-blooded Jocelyn, who is still refusing to return his calls, he agrees to look after his two-year-old nephew. Together, the unlikely pair catches the attention of Marie, a young woman in the neighborhood with a troubled past of her own. As they get to know each other, our hero ventures into unknown territory, where his affection for a damaged kindred spirit just might shock him awake and shake him to the core. By turns hilariously irreverent and unpredictably affecting, "It Feels So Good When I Stop" is a disarmingly fresh love story and coming-of-age novel that refracts with pristine clarity what it's like to grow up, and to fall and stay in love in the real world.

### **It Feels So Good When I Stop Details**

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## From Reader Review It Feels So Good When I Stop for online ebook

### César Viteri says

Este libro tiene una edición preciosa, frases elogiosas de autores de la talla de Nick Hornby, George Pelecanos o William Gibson en la introducción y en la contraportada, y una premisa sugerente. Quizá por estos motivos la decepción que me ha supuesto me ha sentado peor de lo que esperaba.

¿Tiene cosas buenas? Sí, las tiene. Joe Pernice es músico y letrista, y de hecho el disco que acompaña al libro (disponible en Spotify) es muy bueno, mucho mejor que la lectura. Es capaz de escribir una buena frase, de articular un diálogo con chispa entre sus personajes. Elige un escenario interesante y nostálgico, un pueblo costero en Cape Cod fuera de la temporada turística, y sitúa la acción en el 96, poco después del apogeo del grunge en la primera mitad de los 90, pero con frecuentes flashbacks.

¿Cuál es el problema? Su carencia de una estructura al servicio de un propósito. Durante 120 interminables páginas se dedica a pintar una polaroid desvaída del momento, del lugar y de su innominado y pusilánime protagonista, sin que pase apenas algo digno de mención. Los frecuentes flashbacks muestran pinceladas de su vida y relaciones anteriores, pero sin que parezcan tener un propósito o un sentido respecto a su situación actual que haga avanzar la trama. Cuando finalmente se decide contar algo interesante, apenas restan cuarenta páginas, y es entonces cuando nos da 30 páginas buenas, que a esas alturas sólo causan frustración, y remata con un final que no resuelve los conflictos que tenía, pero que no ha acertado a desarrollar.

Podía haber sido un relato corto excelente si se hubiera quedado con la autenticidad de esas treinta páginas buenas, pero desperdicia su potencia guardándolas hasta que realmente ya no te importa lo que le pase a un personaje egoísta e inmaduro, que nos ha contado muchas veces que la música le encanta (con abundante name-dropping), pero que no transmite pasión ni una sola vez. Creo que es lo peor que puede pasar en un libro así: mucho contar y poco mostrar. Sin la nostalgia de haber vivido esa época y esa escena, este libro tiene poco que aportar.

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### Maria Mercè Gallego says

Sigo buscando la canción, aunque el libro tiene muchas melodías.

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### eb says

It's not every novel that can make you laugh out loud in the grimmest of settings--the L train at 9:30 a.m., or waiting for the doctor in a purple paper gown, to take two examples from last week. Pernice is hilarious, and his sentences are marvels of wit and compression. On the downside, this novel has about as much structure, plot, and form as a puddle of melted ice cream. 200 pages go by, and nothing happens and nothing changes. But melted ice cream is still ice cream, right?

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## **Ariana says**

2,5\*

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## **Sandra says**

"Si quiero seguir viviendo, no puedo evitar el dolor."

Joe Pernice es músico. Indie al parecer. Al parecer porque jamás había oído hablar de él ni del 99,9% de músicos que menciona en su novela. De hecho, solo he conocido a uno, a Del Shannon, y por roce.

No sé si existe el término de novela indie pero supongo que ésta podría serlo. El protagonista es un tío deprimido que ha dejado tirada a su esposa recién estrenada en Nueva York y se ha marchado a Cape Cod con su sobrino bebé, Roy, y su antiguo cuñado, James. Allí conoce a gente pintoresca. Y hasta aquí.

El protagonista es un listillo. Todos sus diálogos son inteligentes, rápidos, chispeantes. Todos sus pensamientos también. Él es un desgraciado un pelín misógino. Pero tierno. Folla. Y si no lo hace lo piensa. Todo honestidad.

Lo único que tiene de original esta novela es lo que no parece impostado. Pero engancha igualmente. Porque una vez dentro de la dinámica yo quiero ser como él. Alguien que se emociona una noche y, al día siguiente, cuando le dan la patada, tiene la capacidad de cabrearse con pensamientos brillantes y diálogos llenos de tacos. En la próxima pruebo, a ver si duele menos.

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## **Sheila Bazinga says**

La historia inconclusa de una relación tóxica narrada desde el punto de vista de un hombre cobarde.

No he conseguido conectar con ninguno de los personajes. La testosterona de la narrativa no es tan brillante como la de Hornby como para hacerse soportable, y el ritmo del relato tampoco es especialmente fluido. Digamos una cosa de Hornby: sus personajes son gilipollas, pero al menos son gilipollas muy inteligentes. El protagonista de esta novela es simplemente gilipollas. Y no puedes pretender ser un capullo memorable si te falta materia gris.

Es un relato lleno de esbozos inconexos de una relación mediocre, narrados por un tío con la profundidad emocional de una piscina hinchable. Las pajas solitarias que se hace pensando en su exnovia dan mas rabia que pena.

Lo mejor: la ilustración de la portada.

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## **Ian "Marvin" Graye says**

**Not the Dimmest Star in the Universe**

This first novel wasn't that bad. I just wanted to like it a smidgen more than I did.

I wanted to be able to say that it warranted five stars, not three or four.

I wanted to quote Joe Pernice's lyrics.

I wanted to say that the novel had an Amazing Glimmer, an Amazing Glow, that it made me Lightheaded and Shaken Baby, that the protagonists made me feel like I'd been Blinded by the Stars, that they all Heightened Everything, that it all wasn't a Flaming Wreck or just a Pisshole in the Snow.

I wanted to look on the Bryte Side, not hobble around on a Bum Leg.

I wanted to turn up at the best restaurants in town and dine without reservations.

In the end, I'd probably rate it 3 ½ stars, but I'll raise it to four, out of a spirit of generosity and gentle encouragement.

### **What Does Joe Pernice the Musician Have Going for Him?**

Joe Pernice is an indie musician who works a rich vein somewhere between Singer/Songwriter Troubadour and Power Pop.

I've got five Pernice Brothers albums and one supposedly solo album ("Big Tobacco").

I'm listening to them now, thinking nice thoughts about Big Star and Badfinger.

He has great taste in music, as does the anonymous narrative voice of his novel.

They namedrop Lou Barlow, the Chills, the Dream Syndicate (I've got Joe doing a nice solo version of "Tell Me When It's Over" live on KEXP).

### **What Does Joe Pernice the Novelist Have Going for Him?**

Joe Pernice comes across as a slacker gentleman on the page.

His writing has a beautiful, elegant, gentle tone about it.

He is economical with his description, he focuses on people and their interactions, he gets their conversations down pat.

Not one word or expression jumps off the page and shouts, "I shouldn't be here".

He has good manners, you can't imagine him deliberately hurting anyone.

Nevertheless, his twenty-something protagonist (I'll call him "Joe") does hurt people and he gets hurt.

He does all the things I did at his age, and his friends do all the things that my friends did, usually with and to each other.

The novel hovers between Boston and Brooklyn and Cape Cod, sometimes indistinguishably.

“Joe” drifts between Jocelyn and Marie, learning about them, learning about himself, learning about relationships and learning about life in the process.

Joe Novelist captures all of this word-perfectly, as you would expect a consummate lyricist to do.

### **What Doesn't Joe Pernice the Novelist Quite Pull Off?**

By which question I mean, apart from the masturbation scenes?

My fear is that one or other Joe is just a little too gentlemanly, too polite, too reactive for his own good.

“Joe” Character would never be the first to suggest that we get up to some mischief, though he might be a responsive sidekick if you came up with the idea first.

Joe Novelist is a good portrait painter, he gets the look right, he pays attention to the detail of the static image.

However, I sense that he is less comfortable with verbs and dynamism and drama.

While his characters have shared bad experiences in the past, we hear about them retrospectively, we don't witness the disputes, the arguments, the tragedies.

They are already distant nouns by the time we learn about them.

We aren't party to any of the break-ups, nor are we there for all of the make-ups.

### **Show Me Your Private Parts**

It's not that he writes about these issues ineptly. It's just that he doesn't write about them at all or enough.

He censors them, as if it would be impolite to enter the bedroom and spy on his protagonists.

Only, an author's characters aren't supposed to have any privacy.

Their right of privacy is fictitious.

We want to see bad things happen to them, only so that we can invest in them and see them prevail.

### **Twenty-Something Loop**

“Joe” Character seems to be trapped in a twenty-something loop that pushes and pulls him between two cities and two girls, between commitment and non-attachment, between celibacy and “so-called celibacy”, between loneliness, friendship and family.

Surely, the point of the novel is not that this lifestyle can go on forever, that the song remains the same, that you can keep regurgitating the same album?

Surely, he has to grow up, or turn 30, or do (or experience) something dramatic and life-changing?

Like “get a life”.

Surely, it must feel so good when you stop?

Then again, is this review just the rant of a Post-Thirty-Something who wouldn't mind flitting idly between Boston and Brooklyn for a few years?

My Me-Something, pretending to be on my own, with no direction home, like a complete unknown, like a rolling stone?

Then I realise, ha ha, it's just my imagination running away with me!

### **Whose Novel is It Anyway?**

Ultimately, however, my dilemma as a reader is a product of Joe Novelist's artistic choice, not his artistic failure.

He chose to write his novel this way, and he wrote the novel in his head very capably.

Nevertheless, I want him to do another novel, I want him to hone his skills, I want him to grow as an artist, I want him to finally "discover a lovelier you".

I don't want him to have Zero Refills in his pen.

So, this work is worth exploring before he delivers that difficult sophomore novel.

### **This Review is All Over, Bar the Shouting**

I want to meet Joe Pernice one day, shout him a bourbon and tell him I've got everything he's ever done, even his first novel.

And he'll chuckle and say, "Yeah, first novels are always a bit embarrassing, aren't they?"

And I'll respond, "It wasn't that bad. I just wanted to like it a smidgen more than I did".

And he'll say, "You're such a gentleman."

Then, some girl, maybe his partner, will come up to him and say, "Ready for bed, Joe?" and they'll disappear into the night.

I'll have one more rum (I hate bourbon) and I'll wander off to my imaginary mansion on the hill.

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### **Yolanda says**

No me ha gustado nada, ni me parece original, ni me gustan los personajes, es pretencioso, un poco irreverente y bastante caótico... No sé si he sido yo que no he sabido cogerle el "punto" o simplemente no es un buen libro.

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## Esquejes Lunares says

Supongo que lo peor que puedes decir de un libro es que no sabes si te ha gustado o no y éste es el caso. A pesar de estar muy bien escrito, la historia no sé si me convence. Al principio me pareció francamente aburrido; pero, poco a poco, fue enganchándome, gracias a algunos pasajes francamente brillantes. No obstante, superada ya la mitad del libro, la historia vuelve a adquirir un tono algo errático e insustancial, convirtiendo su lectura en un intrascendente pasatiempo cotidiano. ¿Es un mal libro? No, pero tampoco podría decir que es bueno.

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## York says

Supongo que esto es lo que sucede cuando tienes los contactos adecuados para que publiquen tu libro y hablen bien de él. Independientemente de lo que trate. La idea es buena, la atmósfera por ratos es muy nostálgica y atrayente.

Algunas viñetas cómicas y tristes realmente funcionan. La música está bien. Pero no hay nada en el fondo. Es intrascendente. Se siente como una oportunidad terriblemente desperdiciada.

Al menos la edición es bonita.

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## Brent Hayward says

Never was a big fan of plot anyhow, and I have a soft spot for indie rock slacker stories. The jumping around in time was fine - each schism triggered by either a word or idea that linked the parts together. There were some real laughs in this book, and some pretty heartbreaking moments too. Lots of drinking and fucking and cussing. Some parts were so crude that Bulkowski himself was evoked, like it said in a blurb, but this was truly surprising for me, since Pernice's lovely pop and earlier country music have been soothing me and many others for twenty years or so... Plus, the man gets points in my system for writing a novella about a Smith's album (which I haven't read yet). Then he moves down the street with his family, hanging out in the coffee shop on the corner and being generally pleasant and neighborly.

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## Ensiform says

The nameless narrator, having walked out on his rocky and three-days-old marriage in New York, stays at his brother-in-law James' Cape Cod house that stands empty following James' own impending divorce from the narrator's sister. Looking after his baby nephew to make ends meet, tooling around Cape Cod on a rusty, undersize bicycle his sister rode as child, he thinks back to how he and his wife met and the course their relationship took, while in the present he meets a fragile young woman who wants him to help her make a home movie about her dead son. The narrator was in a band that went nowhere, and Pernice, a hip indie singer-songwriter himself, seeps the book in media cool: earnest appreciation of good music in all its forms, from Doris Day and Mel Tormé to the Chills and the Frogs; name-dropping Tom T. Hall, Teenage Fanclub, Todd Rundgren, Ross McElwee, Mudhoney, Errol Morris, Nick Drake. Lou Barlow even appears briefly to meet the protagonist after a show. The narrator's internal monologue is a peppered with self-deprecating one-liners ("Everything I knew about how fucked up the music business was came from a story about Fugazi I'd skimmed in 'Magnet'") and cynical observations ("I poked at the food like I was examining a pet's stool for an ingested coin").

I'm probably the exact target audience for this sort of prose, and I found it to be an engaging, if ultimately lightweight, novel. The narrator's meandering musings on how little he's done with his life and whether he's permanently damaged his relationship with his wife are bittersweet and amusing. It's not exactly the final word on the human condition, but moving in its way.

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### **Mónica Navarro Romero says**

Es triste terminar un libro y pensar que casi has perdido el tiempo...

No llego a comprender qué es lo que han encontrado interesante para publicarlo. No tiene trama, no ocurre nada, no hay ningún giro que te mantenga en vilo, no está especialmente bien escrito... Incluso, en bastantes ocasiones, el lenguaje y el comportamiento de los personajes es grosero y, un poco, machista.

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### **Silvia Díaz says**

Pues no, no me parece que sea "la mejor canción sobre corazones rotos que vas a leer jamás", como indica una de las opiniones de la contraportada. No sé por qué, pero tengo la impresión de que de un tiempo a esta parte está de moda un tipo de personaje que bajo mi punto de vista ya deja de ser creíble. El del joven atormentado, inseguro, que no sabe lo que quiere... eso mezclado con un poco de lenguaje de mal gusto, alcohol y rock and roll (sexo poco)... y novela lista. Creo que "El guardián entre el centeno" ha hecho mucho daño. La historia no me gusta, fundamentalmente porque no hay historia; el argumento es totalmente plano, no sorprende en ningún momento y a mi al menos me deja bastante (muy) indiferente. Aún así, resalto dos puntos positivos:

- la forma en que está escrito. Me gusta la manera de estructurarlo, el ritmo que se consigue combinando "el antes" y "el después". Lo reconozco, siento debilidad por ese recurso (no lo ha inventado el autor, desde luego, pero al menos lo utiliza correctamente). Si no hubiera recurrido a esta estructura, es muy probable que no lo hubiera acabado, por puro aburrimiento
- la ternura y sensibilidad que se desprende de la relación entre el protagonista y su sobrino, relación que se construye prácticamente desde la nada en el libro y que en mi opinión es lo más bonito de la obra y probablemente lo único rescatable

Le doy dos estrellas (puntuación máxima 1.5) por los dos puntos anteriores, pero no es un libro que recomiende en absoluto.

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### **Siri says**

It felt so good when I stopped reading this book!

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