

8-2019

Review of I Heart Oklahoma

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Recommended Citation

Russo, Michael F. Etc., "Review of I Heart Oklahoma" (2019). *Faculty Publications*. 55.

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The latest novel from Roy Scranton (*War Porn*) begins in the tradition of “road” novels, with Jim, Suzie, and Remy, a trio of friends (and lovers) embarking on a video project to observe and document Trump’s America. As they travel, relational complications inevitably develop, but are never quite resolved. While part one of the book pays homage to Kerouac, Nabokov, and other prose minstrels of the American highway narrative in language that approaches poetry, parts two and three blow a tire and veer way off the freeway into a ditch. For reasons that evade detection, the names of the characters suddenly change, and the writing--at times resembling verbal jazz--becomes, to put it kindly, challenging, with sentences that seem almost computer-generated in their randomness, even occasionally descending into gibberish. (“Tak stug wam dak enten chapeau silas.”) Mercifully, the last part of the book manages to get all four wheels back on the asphalt. Suzie, now solo, writes the story of two serial killers, though it’s not clear how this relates to anything else in the book. VERDICT: Prose soars in places, but the book will definitely try the patience of anyone grounded in traditional prose constructions.

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