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Review of A Week of This: A Novel in Seven Days by Nathan Whitlock

Kevin Clouther

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A Week of This: A Novel in Seven Days.
By Nathan Whitlock.

Apr. 2008. 264p. ECW, \$26.95 (1-55022-815-3).

Whitlock's debut novel charts seven desperate days of a husband and wife, Patrick and Manda, living in a quiet Canadian town. Although the story centers on these two, Whitlock inhabits the heads of other family members, allowing him to pursue various story lines: estranged parents, complicated romance, failing business, assumed fatherhood, and desperation for fatherhood. These are characters made weary by their obligations and aspirations and boredom. All of this leads to more worrying than acting, though there are several dynamic confrontations. There is also, oddly, a great deal of showering. Whitlock possesses a strong command of language and an easiness with metaphor; his characters are drawn evocatively, even when they act predictably. He understands resignation, perhaps at the expense of other complex emotions. The novel never quite sees around a crippling self-pity, evident in each of the main characters. Although redemption is not required, perspective or at least distance would be welcome. In this world, even a plant leans "forward like an exhausted child, embarrassed and wanting to go home." —*Kevin Clouther*

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