

Where have you read something very like this before?

The Urth list — 3 messages, 2 voices, 01 Jul 2003

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4057>

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Alice K. Turner — 01 Jul 2003, 00:29

"Ah, America! Every image of it from the films is true, I thought to myself as my oily-featured driver sped through amber lights and babbled maniacally into his radio. The familiar smell (for this was my third visit) of a place near the airport called Queens came to my nose. Which queen, or queens, were referred to, however, no one could say. Power and greed and grand Machiavellian scheming filled the very air along the avenue we travelled on--Jackson Avenue, I think it was, no doubt named after the famous American pop star possibly born nearby. Ferret-eyed mafiosi, underaged prostitutes, neighborhood drug runners, confidence tricksters, and dreary lumpen nobodies swarmed at every crossing and roundabout. Lying back on the odoriferous upholstery, I drank in the teeming totality through every pore."

--Ian Frazier, Shouts & Murmurs, The New Yorker, July 7

Shouts & Murmurs is the regular weekly short satire department of The New Yorker, and Ian Frazier is a prolific and excellent writer. The above is the first paragraph of the new one, and, trust me, it gets better. Those of you who pick up the reference (which seems pitch-perfect, though I'm sure it's a coincidence) might want to pick up the issue, or at least skim through the short piece at a newsstand.

-alga

Roy C. Lackey — 02 Jul 2003, 04:01 · follows Alice K. Turner

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Okay, I'll bite. It must be coincidence, because a nod to a Wolfe story in a magazine like that would go unnoticed. Who among it's readers would ever have read 7AN--besides you?

-Roy

Alice K. Turner — 03 Jul 2003, 12:41 · follows Roy C. Lackey

----- Original Message -----

From: "Roy C. Lackey" <rclackey at stic.net>
To: "urth" <urth at urth.net>
Sent: Wednesday, July 02, 2003 12:01 AM
Subject: Re: (urth) Where have you read something very like this before?
alga quoted and wrote:

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magazine like that would go unnoticed. Who among it's readers would ever
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Both the tone and the stance throughout this short piece parallel "Seven American Nights."
Frazier is perfectly capable of having read Wolfe. (For many years, the regular sf columnist for
the NY Times has been the New Yorker editor Gerald Jonas, and New Yorker contributors--and
readers--are an eclectic lot.) However, I think that both writers are borrowing from a third, the
New Yorker satirist S.J. Perelman. Perelman has been dead for some time, and never achieved
the iconic status of Thurber or E.B. White, but he was popular and prolific, and both Frazier and
Wolfe surely read him; he would have been of the generation just ahead of Wolfe's own. 7AN is
something of a stylistic departure for Wolfe and I'm guessing a Perelman influence.

-alga