

Minutes of the 4/7/2015 meeting of The Novel Club

Hosts Clyde Henry and James Saunders welcomed members to the home of James Saunders on April 7, 2015. After having a pass at the luxurious food and drink, members sat down to discuss Colum McCann's *Let the Great World Spin*. Robert Jackson presented the biographical paper. We learned that McCann was born in Dublin in 1965, came to America at age 21, and graduated with a BA from the University of Texas, before moving to New York City, where he writes in a closet with a picture of James Joyce on the wall. He has published several other well-received works of fiction.

Leigh Fabens presented the critical paper, emphasizing that the book, which some have called the "first great novel of 9/11," weaves together several different stories of inhabitants of New York who might not normally interact. After the papers were read, members engaged in a lively and, for our staid group, unusually contentious discussion of the novel's merits or lack of merit. Some thought the novel was wonderful, well written, and a fascinating look at the interactions of different strata of New York society. Another faction energetically condemned the book, finding it contrived, unbelievable, overdone, "hard to read", and "disagreeable." The interconnectedness of the characters was "unrealistic", and "not at all convincing" to some. One member characterized the novel as "vertiginous and disagreeable." Still, other members were equally emphatic that *Let the Great World Spin* is a marvelous book, well worth the enormous critical praise it has received. A formal vote was not taken, so it is not clear if the naysayers were more numerous, or merely more vocal, than the yeasayers. In any event, with the reflection that *de gustibus non est disputandum*, members left in good spirits.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicholas Ogan