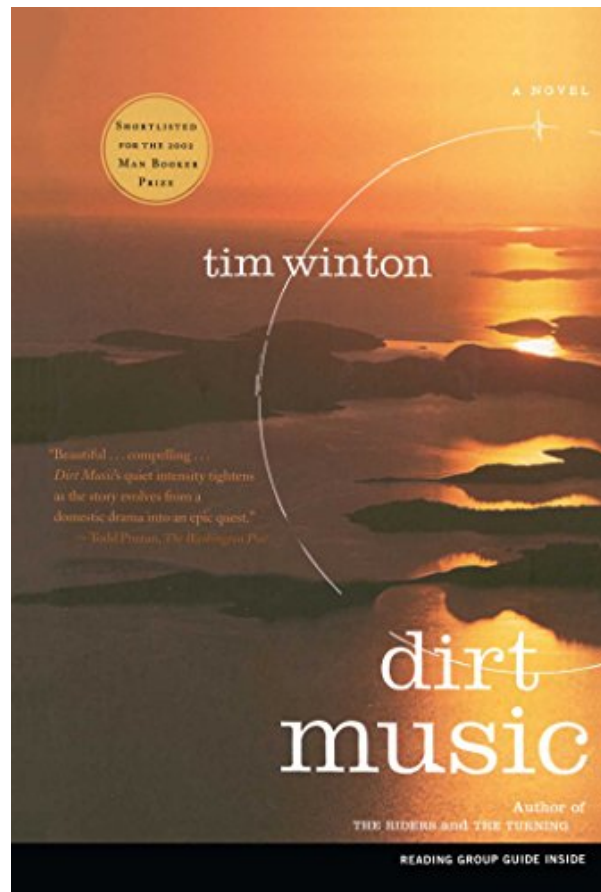
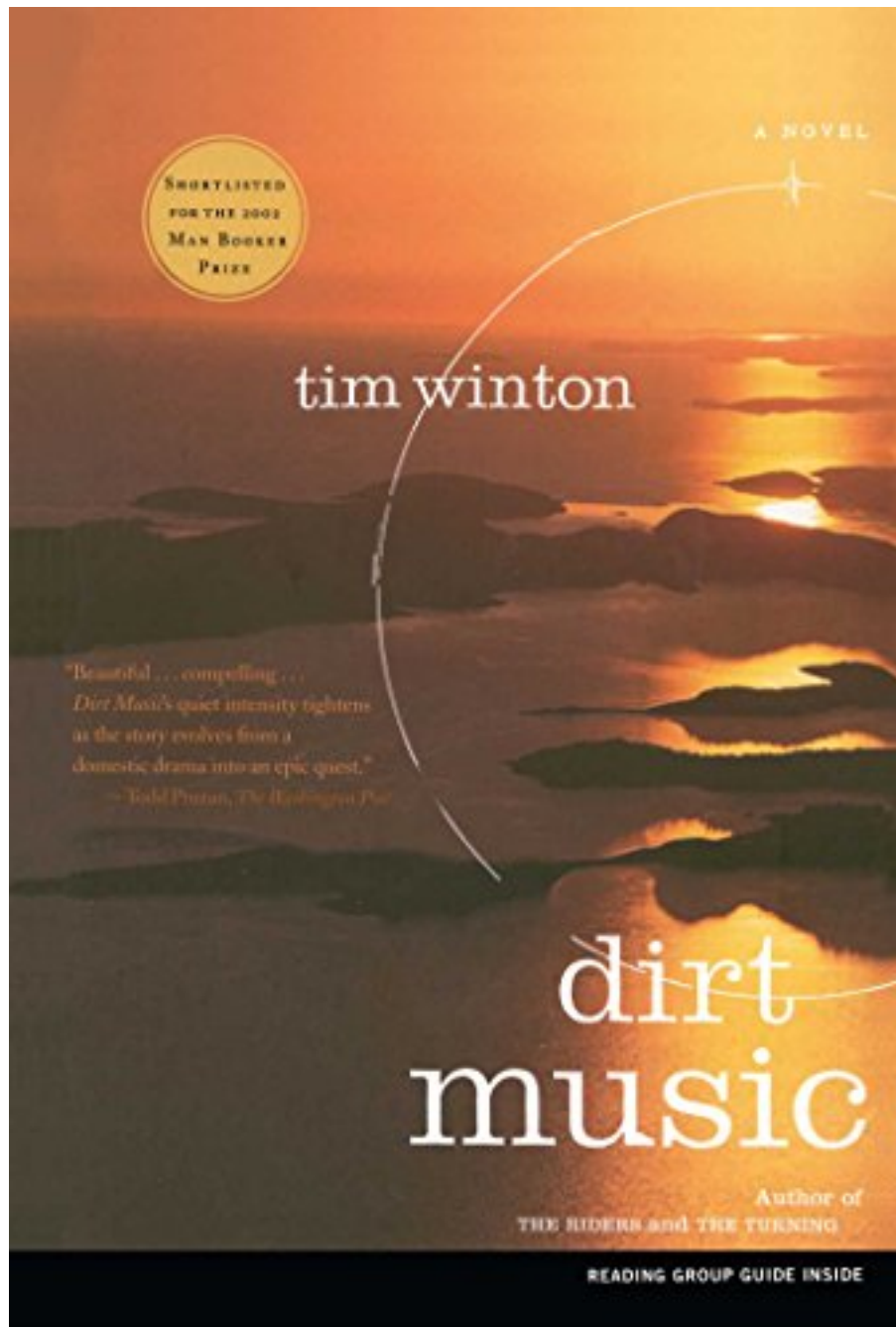


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Winner of The Miles Franklin Literary Award, The Christina Stead Award, WA Premier's Book of the Year, Book Data/ABA Book of the Year Award, Goodreading Award-Readers Choice Book of the Year

Set in the dramatic landscape of Western Australia, *Dirt Music* tells the story of Luther Fox, a broken man who makes his living as an illegal fisherman—a shamateur. Before everyone in his family was killed in a freak rollover, Fox grew melons and counted stars and loved playing his guitar. Now, his life has become a “project of forgetting.” Not until he meets Georgie Jutland, the wife of White Point's most prosperous fisherman, does Fox begin to dream again and hear the dirt music—“anything you can play on a verandah or porch,” he tells Georgie, “without electricity.” Like the beat of a barren heart, nature is never silent. Ambitious and perfectly calibrated, *Dirt Music* resonates with suspense, emotion, and timeless truths.

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1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

A beautifully sung song of self discovery...

By Andrew Ellington

I'm really starting to consider Australian literature to be some of the best fiction I've had the pleasure of getting my hands on. I've already been able to delve into authors like Murray Bail and Elliot Perlman and now I've had the pleasure of reading a stunning novel, 'Dirt Music', written by acclaimed Australian author Tim Winton. I must say this; after this read I surely will be researching his bibliography.

'Dirt Music' takes place in a small fishing town in Western Australia (a fictitious town called White Point) where middle-aged Georgie Jutland is trying to find herself. She's always been a rebellious and free-spirited woman; at odds with her family constantly, never truly feeling as though she belonged anywhere. She's longed for a sense of freedom that everyone around her seems to take away, but she lacks the ability to make the needed effort to really save herself from her apparent failings. She lives with widower Jim Buckridge; a shell of a man who drowns himself in fishing and remains a distant and reclusive mystery to Georgie. She feels as though she loves him, but she struggles with understanding why. She cooks for him, she cleans his house and she takes care of his two sons, but at the end of the day she feels alone and cold.

And then she meets Lu.

The man known as Luther Fox comes with some serious baggage. A beautiful musician who comes from a dishonorable family; Fox has been reduced to a shamateur (fish poacher) due to some unspeakable tragedies in his life. Let's just say that he is the sole survivor to the Fox name. When Georgie spots Fox poaching late at night it is her obligation to inform her husband, a local fisherman. This is their way of living and this man is encroaching on that. Instead of playing informant she decides to play desperate housewife and starts up a heated affair that is far more than just a one-night stand type thing. No, it becomes apparent that both Lu and Georgie fill a void within one another; a void they've been trying to fill for a long time.

The novel effortlessly paints these characters for us, giving us a realistic and authentic portrait of middle-aged despair and self-awareness. Winton's descriptive prose is littered with beautiful expressions of pure emotion and his languid delivery is a joy to read.

My one critique, if I were to have any, would be that at times he expounds too much on areas that need little expansion. He goes to great lengths to flesh out each and every move these characters make, and the prose spans over a good length of time, and so some scenes could have been cut and some time could have been shortened to keep the pacing a little brisker in areas, but in the end it is a trivial complaint when you consider the richly rewarding entirety of the novel. I felt that the novel's ending was a tad premature (even if the novel spans nearly 500 pages), but it was not a disappointment in the least; it just felt a little too sudden for what I was expecting.

Some novels take a full chapter to wind things down; this one almost feels like the ending is on a solitary page.

It's still the best thing I've read in quite some time, and certainly a masterful example of pure storytelling at it's finest. I'd highly recommend this one. If you enjoy a good dramatic story, filled with love, loss and ample amounts of genuine (and realistic) tension then dive right in, for 'Dirt Music' covers all those bases and then some.

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Dirt Music

By Fiction Fanatic

A thoroughly absorbing read that combines funny, sharp-tongued dialogue with rich descriptions of the harsh and beautiful natural environment of Australia. Sympathetic characters try to come to terms with difficult pasts and follow their hearts to live in tune with their own natures. It's about love, and how it gets inside us to compel actions without choice.

Georgie falters from one ill-fitting relationship to another, until she ends up moving in with Jim Buckridge, a widower with two scrappy sons and a very successful fishing business in a small town on the Western coast of Australia. The Buckridges are a prominent family there, and Georgie becomes by day the caretaker of children, home, and man. At night, she tries to quiet her inner restlessness with alcohol and long hours on the Internet, until one night she takes her restlessness outside to the beach, where she happens upon the truck and dog of a fisherman poacher. She trades the Internet for watching this man's activities, befriending the dog and following him until she discovers where he lives. Her fascination with Lu Fox takes her into a new kind of relationship, and Winton renders well the effortless obsession of love. Lu has a tragic family history of his own, which drives him to abandon the music he once prenatally played with his dead relatives.

More than a love story, though, this chronicle of tragedy and loss steers its characters through the contrasting diversities of human adaptations from small town to urban to solitary scavenging on the harsh coastal landscape. And despite human missteps and loss, there is in Winton's vision the possibility for redemption.

26 of 28 people found the following review helpful.

Splendid - Crackles from the page

By KasaC

This novel hummed to me in such a strong voice, I found myself slowing down my pace in order to relish the experience. There is something intriguing about Australia, almost a mirror image of the United States but dramatically different. As in Dermot Bolger's "Father's Music," the music metaphor and its connection to the people in the story makes it almost a character in itself. The descriptions of the land are so vivid, you almost feel the dust in your throat. But what made this book soar for me was its ruminations on the nature of love.

Not romantic love, but love warts and all -- the lost love of a man for his family, the lessening of love between a man and a woman, the complicated love a woman feels for her own highly dysfunctional siblings. I recommend this book, without any reservation.

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