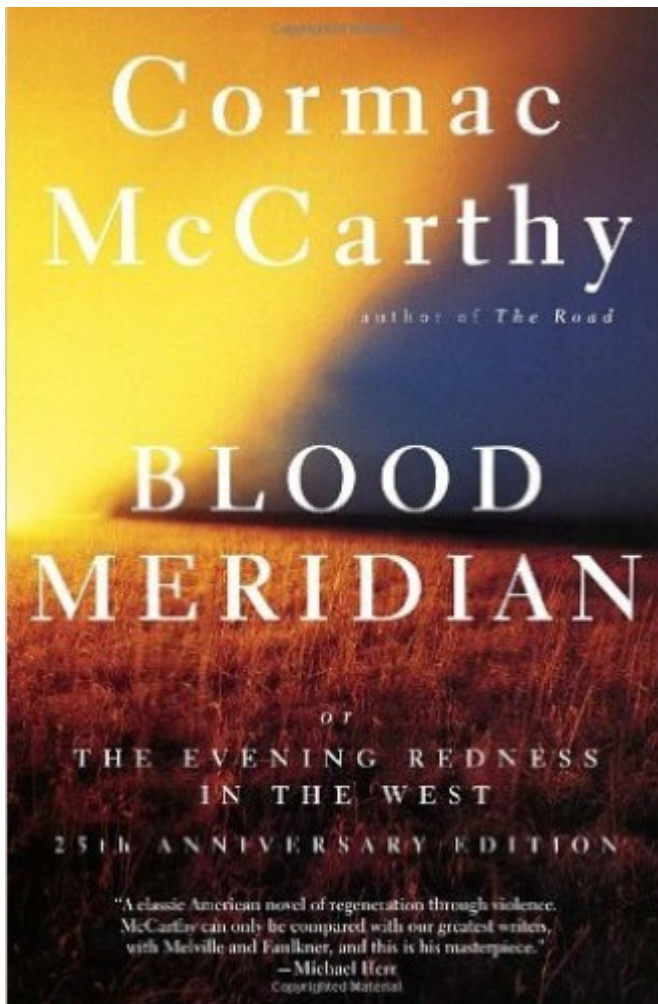


Depths of evil and peace

by [Clyde Edgerton](#) in the [May 11, 2016](#) issue

In Review



Blood Meridian

Cormac McCarthy

Vintage

The Century invited people to comment on their favorite book of the Bible and a book that has helped them appreciate or understand the biblical text. All of the responses are linked [here](#).

Why would Psalms and Cormac McCarthy's novel *Blood Meridian* pop into my head? On first thought, something along these lines: "Psalms—picturing a depth of peace" versus "*Blood Meridian*—picturing a depth of evil." Bookends, in some mysterious way, on perceived experience.

To test this theory, I randomly open to a passage in Psalms and then do the same with *Blood Meridian*. Just to see what happens. From page 588 of my mama's Bible, Psalm 100, verse 5: "For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations." In *Blood Meridian*, I open to page 164: "But when he came back ten minutes later . . . the child was dead and the judge had scalped it [the child]." Bookends.

But could it work the other way around? In Psalms, I quickly find (whoops!): "Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones" (137:9). I thumb backward through *Blood Meridian* and finally find this: "The jagged mountains were pure blue in the dawn and everywhere birds twittered and the sun when it rose caught the moon in the west."

As in all things, the truth shall set you free.