

William Palmer

William Palmer was born in 1945 and was educated at schools in England and Wales. During the 1960s and 70s he lived in London and the Midlands and worked at a bewildering variety of jobs. He began writing at the age of fifteen and became a full-time writer in the mid-80s. His first novel, *The Good Republic*, was published by Secker and Warburg in 1990 and since then he has had eight books published. His latest novel, *The Devil is White*, came out out from Jonathan Cape in 2013.



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Publications

Other

Publication Details	Notes
IN LOVE WITH HELL 2021 Little, Brown Book Group	<p>A study of writers and the effects of drinking on their lives and work. The writers examined in a series of interlocking essays are Patrick Hamilton, Jean Rhys, Charles Jackson, Malcolm Lowry, Dylan Thomas, Elizabeth Bishop, John Cheever, Flann O'Brien, Anthony Burgess, Kingsley Amis, and Richard Yates. A fascinating study of solitary and social drinking, pub and bar culture, and the treatment of drinking in fiction.</p> <p>"William Palmer's wise, witty and empathetic account of the tug 'o war -and the complicity- between alcohol and the frailties of talent lines up brilliant and boozy biographies of eleven celebrated writers, each of whom was propelled by the grip of the bottle, the allure of the bar and pub, the terrors of the blank page, and the destructive perils of both failure and fame. It is outstanding, faultless even." (Jim Crace, award-winning English writer)</p>

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THE DEVIL IS WHITE 2013 Jonathan Cape	<p>It is 1792 and a group of English gentlemen are recruiting settlers for a new world. Anti-slavers, they foresee the shining vision of a free colony in Africa where all races and classes can live together in harmony.</p> <p>At first, all seems well. More than a hundred men, women and children sail from London on board the Pharaoh. They are bound for Muranda, an island off the west coast of Africa that seems to be ideal: uninhabited, fertile, well watered. For a leader, they have a merchant, Sir George Whitcroft; a gallant seaman, Captain Coupland, to sail their ship; Dr Owen to treat their ills; the Reverend Tolchard to guide their spiritual lives; and Caspar Jeavons, a young aristocratic poet, to record their exploits.</p> <p>When they land, Muranda seems a paradise. Fruit hangs from the trees, the waters swarm with fish, the local king is friendly. Some begin to work. Others prefer to laze and swim, to drink and dance at night. But then the tropical rains begin and beat relentlessly down. Fever strikes arbitrarily and cruelly...</p> <p>William Palmer's latest novel is a remarkable portrayal of men and women and the whole range of their experiences and emotions, from violence and terror to tenderness and love, in their brave new world.</p>
THE INDIA HOUSE 2005 Cape	<p>Set in time of the Suez Crisis, this beguiling and funny novel depicts the lives of a crumbling family of die-hard imperialists.</p> <p>"William Palmer's enjoyable novel is set in 1956, and has some similarities with that year's great theatrical event, John Osborne's Look Back In Anger. As with Osborne, the spectre of dying colonialism looms as Mrs Covington, a former grand lady of the Raj, lives in isolation in 'The India House' with her daughter, Julia, who is being kept in a state of innocence - which, inevitably, is shattered by the encroaching world. If Palmer's story occasionally verges on the predictable, with the character of Mrs Covington seldom rising above caricature, there are also many pleasures, from the author's keen observation of Fifties mores to his beautifully crafted style. By the end, the mood of gentle regret and a sense of living in a time out of place resembles no writer so much as Chekhov." (The Observer)</p> <p>"The accuracy with which Palmer reproduces the language of the period is one of the pleasing things about this book; another is the deftness of its structure. The waspish humour is also absolutely right." (The Times)</p> <p>"Bleakly funny ... a coming-of-age novel for all three generations." (The Observer)</p>
FOUR LAST THINGS 1996 Secker	<p>The title story in this collection of short fiction is about a man who had thought himself forgotten, his great works neglected, until one night a researcher and a young companion turn up unexpectedly to discuss his work. The mysterious guests release memories and truths he had preferred to forget.</p>
THE PARDON OF SAINT ANNE 1997 Cape	<p>Walther Klinger, by a twist of fate, becomes a society photographer for the new Nazi "aristocrats" and, guiltily, is almost relieved when the war begins. Finding himself in Brittany just before the Allied invasion, this novel is about how he attempts to make refuge for himself and his lover.</p>

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THE CONTRACT 1995 Cape	The body of a young woman is found apparently raped and then murdered. She is identified as Starr Faithfull, a girl from a good family, but that picture soon changes. She was promiscuous, mentally unstable and had been abused as a child by her guardian, a prominent politician.
LEPORELLO 1993 Secker	A fictional reworking of the story of Don Giovanni, the legendary seducer - seen through the eyes of his servant Leporello. The author reinvents and manipulates the legend that Moliere, Mozart and scores of others have used over the past 300 years.
THE GOOD REPUBLIC 1990 Secker	Opening in 1939, this novel spans 50 years and depicts the central character's life as a political emigre in a run down part of London. He is invited to return to his home city by the nascent nationalist movement where he learns the price of remaining an "innocent" in history.

Poetry

Publication Details	Notes
THE WATER STEPS 2017 Rack Press	This is William Palmer's second full length collection of poems. Of his poetry the distinguished poet David Morley has written: 'There is a kindness in William Palmer's poems: a generosity of perception, language and melody (read him aloud), but he is also generous in his poems' precision and economy. William Palmer's poetry never excludes readers but it does challenge them at the same time as it charms them. He is one of our most interesting poets...'