



The Grand Junction

Joe Costanzo

Lulu (Jun 17, 2014)

Softcover \$13.99 (176pp)

978-1-4834-1198-9

Peppered with straightforward humor, this well-researched book allows a glimpse of a time when America seemed boundless.

This post-World War II escapade is a classic migrant tale that packs in mystery and adventure as it takes readers from Italy to New York to the American West. In *The Grand Junction*, an intriguing novel loaded with 1950s realism, Joe Costanzo exposes the deceit and corruption entrenched in the human desperation to succeed.

Constanzo's protagonists are far from convoluted, but the plot is an involved experiment in pushing the limits of credibility. Prompted by his enraged and worried mother, a baffled woman who wants her husband found, Tommy Caruso leaves his native Italy to search for his missing father in America. In the process, he matures in the New World, finding himself long before he will ever locate his dad.

An entourage of friends and acquaintances form an unusual cast of characters surrounding Tommy as he seeks definitive answers to the countless questions that arise during his prolonged pursuit. Tommaso Senior is a popular man. Everyone seems to be searching for him, including the FBI and CIA; even the mafia is interested in learning his whereabouts. Tommy's newfound American siblings also have questions, along with the women who loved this paternal opportunist who was apparently also a scoundrel.

Peppered with straightforward humor and evocative descriptive passages, this well-researched book allows a glimpse of a time when America seemed boundless: "If there was one thing Tommy had learned for sure since leaving the Bronx it was that America was bigger and emptier than anything he could have ever imagined. A person could ride the rail or drive a car all day long and never see a city, a town, a house or even a single human being. A few cows, if you were lucky. And that was before you got to Chicago. After that, America got even bigger and emptier."

This moment from the recent past is an ideal backdrop for sketches of eccentric people and rugged, dangerous environments, a natural storybook canvas that Costanzo has painted much like an expressionist portraying the feel of a place while leaving some of the sordid details to the imagination. *The Grand Junction* is a short read that could have benefited from a longer framework and a slightly slower pace, allowing adequate exploration of this complicated and darkly mysterious scenario. This meticulous work is a tad overloaded with information for a book of fewer than two hundred pages.

A native of Pedivigliano in southern Italy, Joe Costanzo is a prolific, award-winning journalist living in the US. His ancestral roots enrich the quality of his fiction, adding authenticity that only an Italian could provide.

This cross-genre novel will attract loyal fans of historical America and coming-of-age literary realism.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (July 24, 2014)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a

positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.