

More on Armando Simon's post: Advice to Women Writers



James Joyce (second left) with, left to right, Ford Madox Ford, Ezra Pound and John Quinn in Paris in 1923. Quinn was a lawyer who defended the publication of *Ulysses* in the *Little Review*.

by Bill Corden

[Armando left](#) one male imposter out: James Joyce... I've tried and tried but I can't get through the first couple of chapters of any of his books, to me they're just a stream of rubbish.

I agree with him on "Catcher in the Rye", I read it back 20 years ago and when I told my very intellectual brother that I thought it was piece of garbage, he was quite shocked.

That made me realize that literature is a very personal thing.

I read *Don Quixote* a while back too, but I still remember how amazing it was to have someone to be able to make me laugh 400

years or so later on.

I did read a fabulous book by a female author, Diana Preston, "The Dark Defile" about the history of Afghanistan, you would swear it was written by a guy

But of course, it was a factual/historical tale, females don't write too many books in that genre

I did, too, enjoy books by Jane Austen but the problem I had was trying to remember what the hell they were about once I'd finished them.

I tried to get through "The Idiot" by Dostoyevsky but to me it was the literary equivalent of ploughing a potato field, I just couldn't handle the minutiae of the interpersonal relationships.

Now, *Dr Zhivago* by Pasternak was a cracker even though the interpersonal stuff was just as intense.

The Austen and Joyce sort of minutiae and the stream of consciousness stuff from Salinger is what turns the intellectual reviewers on..... but it leaves me cold.

As an aside, I studiously avoid ANY book that's on the NYT bestseller list.

My very favourite though is the master, John Steinbeck.

I enjoy books where you can "walk alongside" the author.