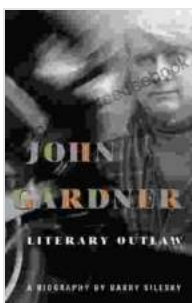


# John Gardner: Literary Outlaw and Barry Silesky's Intimate Portrait

John Gardner, the enigmatic literary figure who left an indelible mark on American literature, has found a compelling biographer in Barry Silesky. Silesky's biography, "John Gardner: Literary Outlaw," delves into the complex life and groundbreaking work of this controversial and influential writer, offering an intimate portrait that illuminates Gardner's rebellious spirit, his profound impact on American literature, and the enduring legacy he left behind.

## John Gardner: The Rebellious Spirit

John Champlin Gardner Jr. was born on July 21, 1933, in Batavia, New York. From a young age, he exhibited a rebellious streak and an unyielding determination to challenge convention. Gardner's early life was marked by poverty and instability, factors that would shape his worldview and his literary sensibility. He attended several universities but never completed a degree, opting instead to pursue his passion for writing and teaching.



### John Gardner: Literary Outlaw by Barry Silesky

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 1420 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 384 pages
Lending	: Enabled
Item Weight	: 1.01 pounds
Dimensions	: 5.55 x 0.79 x 8.5 inches



Gardner's rebellious nature extended to his writing. He rejected the prevailing literary trends of the time, such as postmodernism and experimentalism, and instead championed traditional forms of storytelling. He believed in the power of narrative to engage readers and explore universal human truths. Gardner's fiction, often characterized by its rich language, complex characters, and thrilling plots, defied easy categorization and established him as a literary outlaw.

### **John Gardner: The Literary Outlaw**

Gardner's reputation as a literary outlaw was cemented by his unconventional approach to writing and his outspoken criticism of the literary establishment. He challenged the dominance of New York City publishers and literary critics, arguing that they stifled creativity and prevented true literary merit from being recognized. Gardner's own work, often published by small presses or university presses, found a devoted following among readers who appreciated his willingness to break the rules and explore uncharted territory.

Gardner's literary outlaw status also extended to his teaching. He taught creative writing at several universities, including the prestigious Iowa Writers' Workshop. As an instructor, Gardner was known for his demanding nature and his insistence on excellence. He pushed his students to challenge their limits, to experiment with different forms and styles, and to never compromise their artistic vision.

### **John Gardner: The Enduring Legacy**

John Gardner died tragically in a motorcycle accident in 1982, at the age of 48. Despite his untimely death, his literary legacy continues to inspire writers and readers alike. His work, spanning novels, short stories, essays, and literary criticism, has been widely praised for its originality, its technical mastery, and its profound understanding of the human condition.

Gardner's novels, such as "October Light" (1976), "Nickel Mountain" (1973), and "Grendel" (1971), are considered classics of American literature. They explore themes of violence, love, redemption, and the nature of evil, and are known for their vivid characters, their suspenseful plots, and their lyrical prose.

Gardner's nonfiction work, including "The Art of Fiction" (1983), "On Becoming a Novelist" (1983), and "The Wreck of the Medusa" (1974), provides invaluable insights into the craft of writing. His essays on literary criticism, collected in "The Forms of Fiction" (1962), are required reading for aspiring writers and scholars.

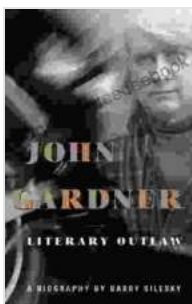
### **Barry Silesky's Intimate Portrait**

Barry Silesky's biography of John Gardner offers an intimate and comprehensive look at the life and work of this literary outlaw. Silesky, who knew Gardner personally, draws on extensive interviews with Gardner's family, friends, colleagues, and students to create a multifaceted portrait of a complex and enigmatic figure.

Silesky's biography explores Gardner's childhood, his early writing career, his teaching experiences, and his struggles with personal demons. Silesky provides a balanced and nuanced account of Gardner's strengths and

weaknesses, his triumphs and his failures, creating a vivid and unforgettable portrait of this literary icon.

John Gardner's legacy as a literary outlaw and groundbreaking writer continues to inspire readers and writers alike. Barry Silesky's biography, "John Gardner: Literary Outlaw," offers an intimate and comprehensive portrait of this complex and influential figure, providing a deeper understanding of his life, his work, and his enduring contribution to American literature.



### John Gardner: Literary Outlaw by Barry Silesky

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