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Ten Thousand Words A Minute (Singles Classic)



Synopsis

Paret lay on the ground, quivering gently, a small froth on his mouth. The house doctor jumped into the ring. He knelt. He pried Paret's eyelid open. He looked at the eyeball staring out. He let the lid snap shut. He reached into his satchel, took out a needle, jabbed Paret with a stimulant. Paret's back rose in a high arch. He writhed in real agony. They were calling him back from death. One wanted to cry out, "Leave the man alone. Let him die." In 1962, Norman Mailer traveled to Chicago to witness the highly anticipated boxing match between heavyweight champion Floyd Patterson and the fearsome Sonny Liston. Along the way, Mailer—arguably the most iconic American writer of the twentieth century—discourses on the nature of, among other things, journalism, prizefighting, good and evil, and life and death. At once terrifying and beautiful, *Ten Thousand Words a Minute* shows a one-of-a-kind talent at his all-time best. *Ten Thousand Words a Minute* was originally published in *Esquire*, February 1963. Cover design by Adil Dara.

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Customer Reviews

This is an excellent, vivid article up through the account of the Patterson-Liston fight. However, the

last section (basically post-fight) struck me as a bit uneven. Mailer can sometimes succeed wonderfully in making himself part of the story (The Armies of the Night, for example). Here, however, his rather silly escapades after the bout are too slight to support the large sentiments about good and evil with which he finishes the piece. So, the last page or two came across, to me, as grandiose and unconvincing. Separately, I'd note that film of the fight can be viewed online, and its climax does not, in my view, bear much resemblance to Mailer's description. The mainstream journalistic accounts of the time, which he disparages, strike me as closer to the truth than Mailer's own description. Nonetheless, I did not hold this against the article -- Mailer was there and I wasn't. It's just something that I think is worth mentioning.

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