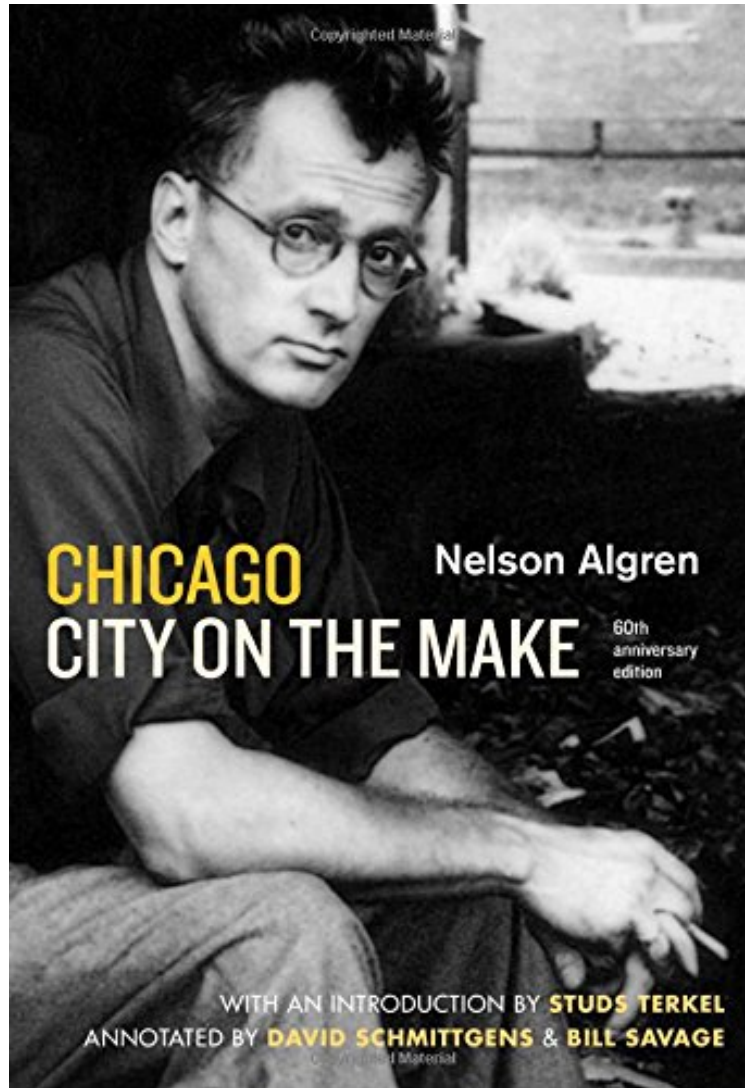


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Chicago: City on the Make: Sixtieth Anniversary Edition

Nelson Algren

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Nelson Algren : Chicago: City on the Make: Sixtieth Anniversary Edition before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Chicago: City on the Make: Sixtieth Anniversary Edition:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. An amazing book but...By MarkI had the pleasure of reading Chicago: City on the Make in part, on a hot summer's day sitting in the back of a moving van with the door open, using a cargo strap as a seat belt. Riding along to the next job reading my first Algren made it an afternoon of twists and turns literal and figurative. As others have pointed out, this book is not a novel, novella or story collection, but a prose poem. They say it like that is a bad thing; as if any potential reader is such an idiot that the book should be

printed with an I.Q.-based warning label ("Warning: unless you can handle Sartre in the original, this book might make your eyes bleed"). The book is a prose poem but so what? It's one of those rare and sometimes great books that can be read aloud for the language alone and for the most part, Algren makes every word about the cold wind off the river and the deep corruption count. When he is at his best, he makes the place sound positively holy--like something that glows. Chicago: City on the Make was like nothing I had ever read then and it is vastly unlike anything I have read since. I am re-buying it for someone else to read (a Chicago native, in fact) but I'm going to get to peek into it again before I give it to him. Chicago: City on the Make is more than just a book it is an experience, a way of doing things that only top-flight, internationally famous authors have the stones to write anymore. My experience of the book is old, in fact, so old, so that I remember only a few words from a few lines clearly and I am left with two major impressions in memory. The first is that it was a brilliant thing, fully worthy of being called "literature." The second was that after an amazing job of keeping his prose flying high above what other authors could ever hope for, the thing bogs down in the end. Algren's voice becomes tired, his segues more and more stretched until there's nothing left of the energy you find in the beginning, but you soon find that you can't really blame him. Algren was not up to the task of finishing his amazing slender volume, but you can't blame him for it: it is certain that no one else could have done any part of it at all. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Looking Back With Anger By An admirer of Saul This is a magnificent prose poem-eulogy even- by Nelson Algren to his city. He takes you through all the characters and diverse cultures and corruptions that ingrained the Chicago he grew up in and are either being erased from the image the commercial big guns want to promote, or have just fallen by the wayside. There's a lot of visceral anger coming through in this book, and it is significant that Algren wrote it during the odious McCarthy anti Communist witch trails that was stifling the freedoms of speech Algren so valued (he dumped his communist party interests as soon as the lack of free thought became obvious to him--now 'free' society was doing the same!) and distorting and promoting a mythical America that just didn't exist outside of a Disney film! The afterword and annotations in the 50th anniversary edition are vital to get the maximum from this book. Algren re-articulates what his views are, and -to my mind-makes a posthumous apology to his friend Richard Wright who he slammed for leaving Chicago for Paris and 'not sticking it out'. What could one black man who had suffered a life time of rejection and abuse do but say he'd had enough. I liked Algren the better for this acknowledgement. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Brian R. Mornar thanks

"Once you've become a part of this particular patch, you'll never love another. Like loving a woman with a broken nose, you may well find lovelier lovelies. But never a lovely so real." Ernest Hemingway once said of Nelson Algren's writing that "you should not read it if you cannot take a punch." The prose poem, Chicago: City on the Make, filled with language that swings and jabs and stuns, lives up to those words. In this sixtieth anniversary edition, Algren presents 120 years of Chicago history through the lens of its "nobodies nobody knows": the tramps, hustlers, aging bar fighters, freed death-row inmates, and anonymous working stiffs who prowl its streets. Upon its original publication in 1951, Algren's Chicago: City on the Make was scorned by the Chicago Chamber of Commerce and local journalists for its gritty portrayal of the city and its people, one that boldly defied City Hall's business and tourism initiatives. Yet the book captures the essential dilemma of Chicago: the dynamic tension between the city's breathtaking beauty and its utter brutality, its boundless human energy and its stifling greed and violence. The sixtieth anniversary edition features historic Chicago photos and annotations on everything from defunct slang to Chicagoans, famous and obscure, to what the Black Sox scandal was and why it mattered. More accessible than ever, this is, as Studs Terkel says, "the best book about Chicago."

"The best book about Chicago."