

REJECT A HIT

The Road by Cormac McCarthy
SPOOF-REJECTED BY SUZANNE M. BRAZIL

Jan. 12, 2005

Dear Cormac McCarthy:

We received your manuscript *The Road*, and boy, have you missed the mark. Travel writing is obviously not your niche. Readers want colorful locales, cheerful people, exciting things to do! I get the "realism" angle but this whole trip verges on unpleasant. Your descriptions are dreary and depressing and vaguely apocalyptic.

People want restaurant reviews and activity suggestions. You give them "road agents" and surly homeless people with questionable diets. Good travel writing takes us on adventures and helps us escape the daily grind. A nameless boy and his dad walking to the beach is not scintillating material. Your subjects literally just wander for days and days. Thus your manuscript may be more suited for an Outward Bound guidebook.

I did enjoy the relationship between The Man and The Boy, but think your attention to this bordered on obsessive. They're always together and never seem to have any fun. And then, spoiler alert, the guy dies! So now the kid is an orphan on vacation? What a downer! It's almost like this trip is the end of the world or something.

This is not the kind of travel writing that wins awards or scores appearances on "Oprah." I suggest you switch your focus to newspaper journalism. Maybe take up obituary writing.

Leave the lighthearted anecdotes to those who know how to have a good time.

Sincerely,

Suzanne M. Brazil
Senior Agent
De Pressed Publishers

Let's step once again into the role of the unconvinced, perhaps even curmudgeonly or fool-hearted editor:

What harsh rejection letters might the authors of some of our favorite hit books have had to endure?

→ CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS: If you'd like to be the one doing the rebuffing, channel the most clueless of editors by humorously rejecting a hit in 300 words or fewer. Then, submit your letter via email to wdsuggestions@fwmedia.com with "Reject a Hit" in the subject line.

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Cannibalism
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