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## On "The Elephant Hills Lodge"

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## “ON “THE ELEPHANT HILLS LODGE”

PETER ROCK

2010 MONTANA PRIZE IN FICTION JUDGE

“The Elephant Hills Lodge” is a story of great subtlety and complication. As our narrator takes us deeper into a foreign land (Africa), cultural differences that could be over-emphasized serve as the background from which amazing characters emerge. This is storytelling that keeps its focus on the personal and allows many mysteries to arise from its context. More than anything, the relationships it chooses to investigate—between our narrator and the girl, Grace, and with the two native women, and the mysterious German man also staying at the lodge—are so restrained and so unfamiliar (no love affair, no exotic celebration, no ethnic epiphany) that they take us in directions that have to be appreciated, that can’t be anticipated. I can’t remember a narrator who generated paranoia and sympathy in such equal measures.