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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2006

Poor Old Edward Whittemore

I keep lots of notes about books I want to check out, dotting down any name that gets an intriguing reference, positive review and so on. One note referred lazily to Edgar Whittemore, which turned out to be a reference to Edward Whittemore, a rather obscure writer whose published work of five interconnected novels had been reprinted in 2003. Truly enigmatic, both praised and disdained, he doesn't sound exactly like someone whose work I would take to heart. [But I can't resist the spectacular demise of his life as described in Wikipedia.](#) He was intensely private, refused to do interviews with "unknown correspondents" (ie. people like me) and therefore did virtually no interviews, [and] he lived with a woman for five years. His books -- including his magnum opus the Jerusalem Quartet -- sold nothing and then went out of print. And then?

Edward Whittemore spent the final years of his life in poverty, working as a photocopier at an attorney's office. He died in August 3, 1995 in New York City, shortly after being diagnosed with prostate cancer.

He's 62, living in poverty, working THE COPYING MACHINE for a lawyer and then dies right after being diagnosed with prostate cancer? It's enough to give an obscure freelance writer nightmares.

POSTED BY MICHAEL IN NEW YORK AT 8:31 PM



2 COMMENTS:

[I am not Star Jones](#) said...

or a heads up to change careers.

1:15 PM

[Michael in New York](#) said...

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