

## **The Heart is a Lonely Hunter** by Carson McCullers

Kent Haruf, *Plainsong* (1999)

Set on set on the High Plains in east Colorado, this portrait of small-town life moves between various characters -- two elderly brothers living on their neglected farm, a high school teacher raising his two sons by himself, a pregnant teenager deserted by her boyfriend -- who together find connection, meaning and survival with one another.

Flannery O'Connor, *Wise Blood* (1962)

A black comedy about small-town life in classic O'Connor style reveals the physical, moral and spiritual disconnection among a cast of Southerners searching for faith and meaning in the modern world.

Brady Udall, *Letting Loose the Hounds* (2001)

This sequence of seriocomic short stories set mostly in the American West and Southwest finds a variety of misfits -- young loners, divorcees, exiles from dysfunctional families -- looking for a cure for their isolation. The story "The Opposite of Loneliness" questions the meaning of "family" when its divorced protagonist, a social worker, finds kinship with the residents of the group home he manages.

Walker Percy, *The Moviegoer* (1961)

Percy's National Book Award-winning first novel examines modern alienation among a more affluent segment of society than *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*. Binx Bolling, a young New Orleans stockbroker who suffers from an unidentifiable malaise, comes to the realization that he must embark on a "search" for meaning in his otherwise empty life, much like Biff Brannon throughout McCullers's novel.

*Readalikes: from NovelList*

*This Book Discussion Guide was developed by Neil Giordano, a freelance writer and editor living outside Boston*