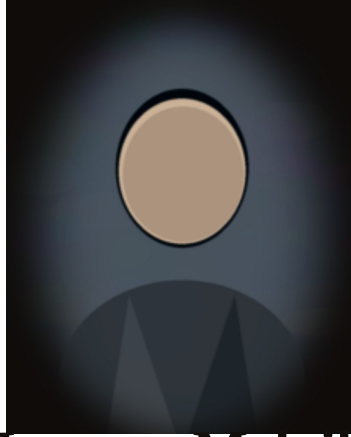




Herman Melville

August 1, 1819 - September 28, 1891

New York, New York

Herman Melville - American novelist and poet whose *Moby-Dick* sank commercially in his lifetime and later rose as a cornerstone of the national imagination - died in New York City on September 28, 1891. He was seventy-two. Born August 1, 1819, in Manhattan to a merchant family that slid from comfort into debt after his father's death, he shipped as a cabin boy and later as a whaler, gathering Pacific islands and fore-castle talk that *Typee* and *Omoo* turned into early bestsellers.

Moby-Dick; or, *The Whale* (1851) baffled many reviewers with its sermons, cetology, and obsession; *Pierre* and *The Confidence-Man* deepened the estrangement. He spent decades as a customs inspector on the New York docks, writing poetry that few bought, while the white whale waited in remainder piles for the twentieth century to notice. *Billy Budd*, left in manuscript, would surface after his death like a last boarding from an unfinished voyage.

East 26th Street was the quiet end of a loud book. He died of heart failure at home, little celebrated in the newspapers that had once reviewed him as a South Seas curiosity.

The *Acushnet* and the *Marquesas* taught him that America already contained the Pacific; the Custom House taught patience. He dedicated *Moby-Dick* to Hawthorne, then outlived the friendship's heat and the novel's first failure.

He died in New York City on September 28, 1891. Readers still open to "Call me Ishmael" as if the *Pequod* had never sunk.

Melville's gift was metaphysical seamanship - charting democracy, monomania, and the sea in one rolling sentence. Notice Nearby keeps the death date so September 28 remembers the Manhattan-born sailor-clerk who wrote America's fiercest whale.

Services

Died in New York City, September 28, 1891. Novelist and poet; Moby-Dick; Typee; Billy Budd; American Renaissance.

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