



*The Road* by Cormac McCarthy displays the cycling seasons at the end of society that culminate in the world's rebirth in the spring. The world as we know it now, and what is referred to as the old world in *The Road*, is the summer of current civilization. It is epitomized by the character of the woman who only appears as faint memories in the man's mind. She lived happily in the comfortable abundance of the world before the apocalypse. When the summer ended and the world was plunged into a seemingly eternal darkness all she could see was the fading light of the past and a bleak future that seemed eternal and impossible to change.

The fall is a season of harvests and preparing for the impending winter, or in *The Road* the actual apocalypse. The lively colors of summer don't last very long into fall, everything that's

left of the abundance of the warm season is hoarded in a few carefully guarded locations that will hopefully provide provisions through the winter. Ely is the fall season of civilization in a post apocalyptic world. He continues to represent the thought and impracticalities of the woman, but he is dried out and has wrung all desire for the past out of his life. Ely knows what is coming and that it will be hard, but he is ready for it because he saved some of the past abundance. He carries a store of intellectual wealth without the baggage of longing for the time that preceded his situation. He is the practicality of strictly kept rations and the wisdom of frivolous feasting in the middle of a famine. He also generates the last new thoughts that spring up independently at the very end of the growing season. Ely was influenced by the summer, continued to grow and think throughout the fall, and so can pull himself through well into the winter before he dies.

The winter is a long death that watches everything unprepared for it. The man has been living in the winter since the moment summer left with the death of his wife. The man is aware of what he doesn't have and what he's never been ready for, but unlike every other character he recognizes the end of winter in spring. He manages to dream of a pleasant future as much as the present nightmares and the warm past. He reminisces over the summer and looks ahead with hope for its return.

The man is also pictured above grumpily expressing our collective frustration with McCarthy's exhausting portrayal of women.

Finally the spring witnesses the rebirth of the world, similar to how it was, but never the same. The boy carries the flame of a future beyond the ashes of the ended world. No one else so far introduced will be there to help him, all he'll have is a blurry image of what used to be and the ability to strive for it.