Title: Haunted Laughter: Spectral Justice and Satirical Memory in Percival Everett's *The Trees*

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Abstract: This article reads Percival Everett's *The Trees* (2021) as a contemporary experiment in how the novel can reckon with the U.S.'s lynching archive. Focusing on the recurring mutilated corpse, the setting of Money, Mississippi, and the novel's grotesquely comic crime scenes, I argue that Everett fuses haunting and satire to stage "spectral justice": the dead return not as gothic décor but as agents who force institutions and bystanders to look again. Close readings of key episodes show how deadpan humor exposes bureaucratic denial, how the collapsing detective plot refuses easy individualized guilt, and how the closing catalog of real lynching victims converts genre closure into a memorial roll call. Bringing these narrative strategies together, the essay contends that *The Trees* functions as a metamodern countermemorial, oscillating between ridicule and care to retrain readers' attention from solving a puzzle to bearing witness to a history that will not stay buried.

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