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Donohue, Keith. Centuries of June

The narrator of Donohue's somewhat surreal novel, Jack, awakens on his bathroom floor with a cracked skull, apparently having fallen. From there, his night just gets stranger. A man who initially reminds him of his own father and later of Samuel Beckett has joined him in the bathroom and the two banter amusingly before being joined by seven women in succession. Each woman, apparently the ghost or spirit of a woman in one of Jack's former lives, has an ax to grind with him—sometimes quite literally, as each woman initially tries to kill him before settling in to tell her story. Each woman was wounded, betrayed, or even killed by a man in their life—and Jack may well be that man. The woman's stories are fascinating, told in a variety of styles and invoking their characters and periods vividly and effectively. When Jack is finally visited by an eighth woman, his own wife, the reason for the night's strange events become clear.

The women's stories are the true stand-out in this novel, with the slightly absurdist, Waiting For Godot-esque interludes in the bathroom serving almost as a distraction at times. Not for everyone, but those with a taste for the offbeat will be pleased.

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