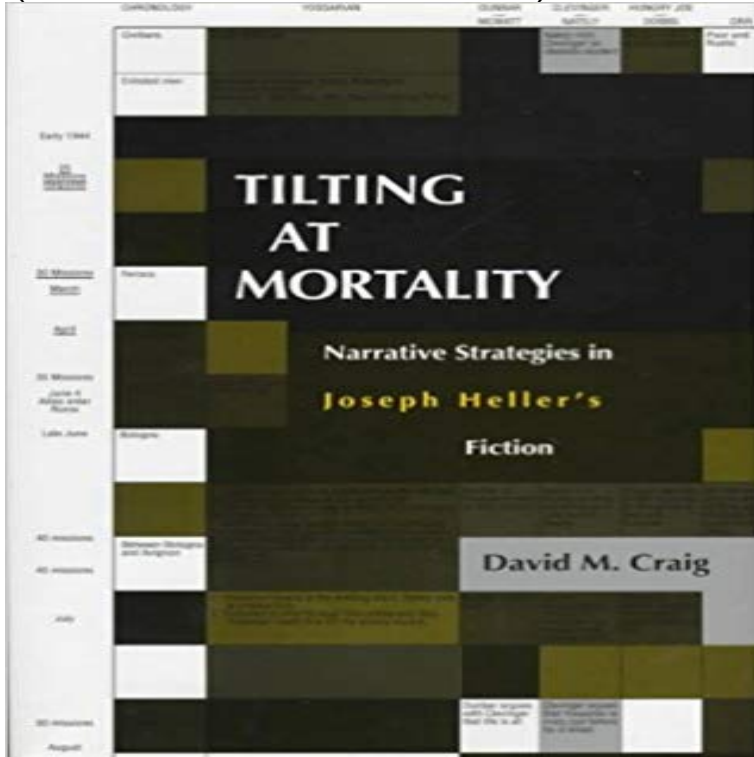


# Tilting at Mortality: Narrative Strategies in Joseph Hellers Fiction (Humor in Life and Letters)



Unlike other studies of Joseph Heller, which focus on his two primary works, *Catch-22* and *Something Happened*, this volume considers Heller's entire career and examines each of his novels on its own terms, including Heller's latest work, *Closing Time*. *Tilting at Mortality* pursues two complementary tracks: first, it explores the evolution of Heller's essential subject, human mortality; and second, it delineates his artistic development as a novelist. Mortality-in particular, the death of children or alternatively of wounded innocents-provides Heller with his core story. In *Catch-22*, Heller addresses this concern in the Snowden death scene, and with each subsequent novel he has revised and retold this story, always concluding with a wrenching death that occurs in the penultimate chapter. Each novel emerges as another gesture of comic defiance, each constituting a strident, insistent, angry, sometimes eloquent protest against mortality.

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