



The Vintage Book of Contemporary American Short Stories

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Variously funny, frightening, poignant, and exhilarating, these collected stories displays the best American writers at the peak of their powers and the national narrative at its most eloquent, truthful, and inventive.

The thirty-three stories in this volume prove that American short fiction maybe be our most distinctive national art form. As selected and introduced by Tobias Wolff, they also make up an alternate map of the United States that represents not just geography but narrative traditions, cultural heritage, and divergent approaches.

Contributors and stories include: Mary Gaitskill, "A Romantic Weekend"; Andre Dubus, "The Fat Girl"; Tim O'Brien, "The Things They Carried"; Raymond Carver, "Cathedral"; Joyce Carol Oates, "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?"; Mona Simpson, "Lawns"; Ann Beattie, "A Vintage Thunderbird"; Jamaica Kincaid, "Girl"; Stuart Dybek, "Chopin in Water"; Ron Hansen, "Wickedness"; Denis Johnson, "Emergency"; Edward P. Jones, "The First Day"; John L'Heureux, "Departures"; Ralph Lombreglia, "Men Under Water"; Robert Olmstead, "Cody's Story"; Jayne Anne Phillips, "Home"; Susan Power, "Moonwalk"; Amy Tan, "Rules of the Game"; Stephanie Vaughn, "Dog Heaven"; Joy Williams, "Train"; Dorothy Allison, "River of Names"; Richard Bausch, "All The Way in Flagstaff, Arizona"; and more.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Editor Wolff (*This Boy's Life*, LJ 1/89) describes the stories he selected for this volume as representing a reaction to the postmodern, self-conscious fictional attitude emerging from the Sixties. Realistic and convincing, these voices of the past decade and a half create a sense of kinship that remains with readers as insistently as do their own memories. This collection gives us 33 well-chosen stories. Side by side with classics by favorite writers-Raymond Carver, Ann Beattie, Richard Ford-are recent contributions by Dennis Johnson, Allan Gurganus, Thom Jones, and others. While these diverse stories defy categorization as an identifiable trend in writing, they do share exuberance and clarity, offering depictions of often painful contemporary situations softened by humor and honesty. Highly recommended.

Eleanor Mitchell Arizona State Univ., West Phoenix

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From [Booklist](#)

For an enthralling collection that includes such classics as Raymond Carver's "Cathedral," "The Fat Girl" by Andre Dubus, "A Vintage Thunderbird" by Ann Beattie, and the more recent "Rules of the Game" from Amy Tan's book *The Joy Luck Club*, Wolff has selected finely crafted stories by writers at the peak of their form. In addition, Kate Braverman's contribution is a consummate example of the intensely realized situations all these stories unfailingly deliver. Her protagonist's powerful attraction to Lenny, a sleazy yet seductive hood, demonstrates a capacity for self-destruction that reverberates long after reading "Tall Tales from the Mekong Delta." These satisfying stories validate the robust state of affairs of contemporary short fiction. *Alice Joyce*

From Kirkus Reviews

If there is anything other than the nationality of their authors that unites these stories, it is a disinterest in postmodern formal athleticism. Editor Wolff (*This Boy's Life*, 1988, etc.) has chosen stories, not fictions. You will find no John Barth here, no Robert Coover, no Donald Barthelme. What you get is Dorothy Allison, Richard Bausch, and Ann Beattie; Raymond Carver, Mary Gaitskill, and Ralph Lombreglia. Some voices--Thom Jones, Denis Johnson, John Edgar Wideman--are more idiosyncratic than others, but this collection is solid meat-and-potatoes fare. It's tempting to read some cultural significance into Wolff's selections and omissions: Maybe he's trying to distinguish American virtues of simplicity and directness from such alien vices as complexity and obliquity. Then again, maybe he just likes the stories. (Author tour) -- Copyright ©1994, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

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