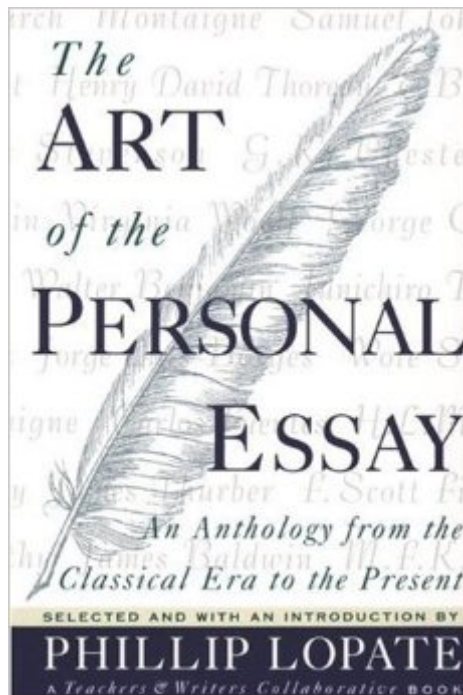


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The Art Of The Personal Essay: An Anthology From The Classical Era To The Present



Synopsis

For more than four hundred years, the personal essay has been one of the richest and most vibrant of all literary forms. Distinguished from the detached formal essay by its friendly, conversational tone, its loose structure, and its drive toward candor and self-disclosure, the personal essay seizes on the minutiae of daily life—vanities, fashions, foibles, oddballs, seasonal rituals, love and disappointment, the pleasures of solitude, reading, taking a walk -- to offer insight into the human condition and the great social and political issues of the day. *The Art of the Personal Essay* is the first anthology to celebrate this fertile genre. By presenting more than seventy-five personal essays, including influential forerunners from ancient Greece, Rome, and the Far East, masterpieces from the dawn of the personal essay in the sixteenth century, and a wealth of the finest personal essays from the last four centuries, editor Phillip Lopate, himself an acclaimed essayist, displays the tradition of the personal essay in all its historical grandeur, depth, and diversity.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It's clear that reading good literature leads to improved writing. This anthology is a superb collection, selected and introduced by Phillip Lopate. Lopate is said to be one of the best essayists and critics of the personal essay. The book identifies itself as a "Teachers & Writers Collaborative Book". It is absolutely wonderful, a thick, heavy book full of pleasure and is dubbed as the "first anthology to celebrate this lively, fertile genre." In his introduction, Lopate says of the personal essay: The

hallmark of the personal essay is its intimacy. The writer seems to be speaking directly into your ear, confiding everything from gossip to wisdom. Through sharing thoughts, memories, desires, complaints, and whimsies, the personal essayist sets up a relationship with the reader, a dialogue, a friendship, if you will, based on identification, understanding, testiness, and companionship. The introduction is with rich detail of everything you ever needed to know about the "personal essay". He delves into his selection, rationale and arrangement of this book. As I said, everything you ever needed to know is here! The collection consists of 75 personal essays, spanning over 400 years. The first section is called the forerunners, these are the earliest dating from 1600's, including: Seneca, Plutarch, Kenko, Shonagon, Hsiu, Michel De Montaigne. Then, the rise of the English essay: Abraham Cowley, Addison & Steele, Samuel Johnson, Robert Louis Stevenson, Virginia Woolf, Orwell, etc. Another section is titled "Other Cultures, Other Continents", some listed are: Ivan Turgenev, Lu Hsun, Jorge Luis Borges, Roland Barthes, etc. Last section is titled "American Scene" includes: Thoreau, Thurber, McCarthy, Fitzgerald, E.B. White, Baldwin, Didion, Lopate, etc., etc.

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