

Civilwarland In Bad Decline George Saunders

Two classic short stories, one about a male reporter who writes an advice column, and the other, about people who have migrated to California in expectation of health and ease. A superb collection of fifteen stories—including “Wakefield,” the inspiration for the film starring Bryan Cranston—by the author of *Ragtime*, *The March*, *The Book of Daniel*, and *Billy Bathgate*. He has been called “a national treasure” by George Saunders. Doctorow’s great topic, said Don DeLillo, is “the reach of American possibility, in which plain lives take on the cadences of history.” This power is apparent everywhere in these stories: the bravery and self-delusion of people seeking the American dream; the geniuses, mystics, and charlatans who offer people false hope, or an actual glimpse of greatness. In “A House on the Plains,” a mother has a plan for financial independence, which may include murder. In “Walter John Harmon,” a man starts a cult using subterfuge and seduction. “Jolene: A Life” follows a teenager who escapes her home for Hollywood on a perilous quest for success. “Heist,” the account of an Episcopal priest coping with a crisis of faith, was expanded into the bestseller *City of God*. “The Water Works,” about the underbelly of 1870s New York, grew into a brilliant novel. “Liner Notes: The Songs of Billy Bathgate” is a corollary to the renowned novel and includes Doctorow’s revisions. These fifteen stories, written from the 1960s to the early twenty-first century, and selected, revised, and placed in order by the author himself shortly before he died in 2015, are a testament to the genius of E. L. Doctorow. Praise for Doctorow: *Collected Stories* “Here, without the framework of historical context that defines his best-known novels, we discover a Doctorow equally adept at plumbing the contemporary American psyche and are reminded of literature’s loss following his death.”—O: *The Oprah Magazine* “These tales—sketches, really, wide-ranging in time, place and circumstances—are penned by a modern master. . . . What makes Doctorow’s historical novels brilliant is their engaging prose, smart writerly style, unconventional narratives and inventive and entertaining plots. Same for these dog-eared, pre-owned stories.”—USA Today Praise for E. L. Doctorow “He has rewarded us, these forty-five years, with a vision of ourselves, as a people, a vision possessed of what I might call ‘aspirational verve’—he sees us clearly and tenderly, just as we are, but also sees past that—to what we might, at our best, become.”—George Saunders “Doctorow did not so much write fiction about history as he seemed to occupy history itself. He owned it. He made it his own.”—Ta-Nehisi Coates “On every level, [Doctorow’s] work is powerful. . . . His sensitivity to language is perfectly balanced, and complemented by a gigantic vision.”—Jennifer Egan “[He wrote] with such stunning audacity that I can still remember my parents’ awed dinner-table conversation, that summer, about a novel they were reading, called *Ragtime*, that went up to the overgrown wall enclosing the garden of fiction and opened the doorway to history.”—Michael Chabon “Doctorow’s prose tends to create its own landscape, and to become a force that works in opposition to the power of social reality.”—Don DeLillo “A writer of dazzling gifts and boundless imaginative energy.”—Joyce Carol Oates

Reading is a revolutionary act, an act of engagement in a culture that wants us to disengage. In *The Lost Art of Reading*, David L. Ulin asks a number of timely questions - why is literature important? What does it offer, especially now? Blending commentary with memoir, Ulin addresses the importance of the simple act of reading in an increasingly digital culture. Reading a book, flipping through hard pages, or shuffling them on screen - it doesn't matter. The key is the act of reading, and it's seriousness and depth. Ulin emphasizes the importance of reflection and pause allowed by stopping to read a book, and the accompanying focus required to let the mind run free in a world that is not one's own. Are we willing to risk our collective interest in contemplation, nuanced thinking, and empathy? Far from preaching to the choir, *The Lost Art of Reading* is a call to arms, or rather, to pages.

WINNER OF THE 2014 FOLIO PRIZE AND SHORTLISTED FOR THE NATIONAL BOOK

AWARD 2013 George Saunders's most wryly hilarious and disturbing collection yet, *Tenth of December* illuminates human experience and explores figures lost in a labyrinth of troubling preoccupations. A family member recollects a backyard pole dressed for all occasions; Jeff faces horrifying ultimatums and the prospect of Darkenfloxx™ in some unusual drug trials; and Al Roosten hides his own internal monologue behind a winning smile that he hopes will make him popular. With dark visions of the future riffing against ghosts of the past and the ever-settling present, this collection sings with astonishing charm and intensity.

From the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of the Man Booker Prize-winning novel *Lincoln in the Bardo* and the story collection *Tenth of December*, a 2013 National Book Award Finalist for Fiction. In a profoundly strange country called Inner Horner, large enough for only one resident at a time, citizens waiting to enter the country fall under the rule of the power-hungry and tyrannical Phil, setting off a chain of injustice and mass hysteria. An *Animal Farm* for the 21st century, this is an incendiary political satire of unprecedented imagination, spiky humor, and cautionary appreciation for the hysteric in everyone. Over six years in the writing, and brilliantly and beautifully packaged, this novella is Saunders' first stand-alone, book-length work—and his first book for adults in five years.

For the first time in one volume, the three novels that introduced Michael Connelly's great LAPD homicide detective, maverick Hieronymous (Harry) Bosch. *The Black Echo* (Winner of the Edgar Award for Best First Novel) For Harry Bosch-hero, loner, nighthawk-the body stuffed in a drainpipe off Mulholland Drive isn't just another statistic. This one is personal. Billy Meadows was a fellow Vietnam "tunnel rat," fighting the VC and the fear they used to call the Black Echo. Harry let Meadows down once. He won't do it again. *The Black Ice* The corpse in the hotel room seems to be that of a missing LAPD narcotics officer. Rumors abound that the cop had crossed over-selling a new drug called Black Ice. Now Harry's making some dangerous connections, leading from the cop to a string of bloody murders, and from Hollywood Boulevard's drug bazaar to Mexico's dusty back alleys. In this lethal game, Harry is likely to be the next victim. *The Concrete Blonde* When Harry Bosch shot and killed Norman Church, the police were convinced it marked the end of the hunt for the Dollmaker-L.A.'s most bizarre serial killer. But now Church's widow is accusing Harry of killing the wrong man—a charge that rings terrifyingly true when a new victim is discovered with the Dollmaker's macabre signature. For the second time, Harry must hunt the murderer down, before he strikes again. Together, these three novels are the perfect way to discover, or rediscover, the sleuth the *New York Times Book Review* called a "wonderful, old-fashioned hero who isn't afraid to walk through the flames."

"[A] fast-paced yarn that nimbly soars above the Irish crime fiction genre Kidd clearly knows very well." —*New York Times Book Review* "[A] supernaturally skillful debut." —*Vanity Fair* "A delicious, gratifying and ageless story." —*New York Journal of Books* Abandoned on the steps of an orphanage as an infant, Dublin charmer Mahony assumed all his life that his mother had simply given him up. But when he receives a tip one night at the bar suggesting that foul play may have led to the disappearance of his mother, he decides to return to the rural Irish village where he was born to learn what really happened twenty-six years earlier. From the moment he sets foot in Mulderrig, Mahony's presence turns the village upside down. His uncannily familiar face and outsider's ways cause a stir among the locals, who receive him with a mixture of curiosity (the men), excitement (the women), and suspicion (the pious). It seems that his mother, Orla Sweeney, had left quite an impression on this little town—dearly beloved to some, a scourge and a menace to others. But who would have had reason to get rid of her for good? Determined to find answers, Mahony solicits the help of brash pot-stirrer and retired actress Mrs. Cauley, and the two concoct an ingenious plan to get the town talking, aided and abetted by a cast of eccentric characters, some from beyond the grave. What begins as a personal mission gradually becomes a quiet revolution: a young man and his town uniting

against corruption of power, against those who seek to freeze their small worlds in time, to quash the sinister tides of progress and modernity come hell or high water. But what those people seem to forget is that Mahony has the dead on his side.... Centering on a small town rife with secrets and propelled by a twisting-and-turning plot, *Himself* is a gem of a book, a darkly comic mystery, and a beautiful tribute to the magic of language, legacy, and storytelling. A selection of the best and most representative contemporary American short fiction from 1970 to 2020, including such authors as Ursula K. LeGuin, Toni Cade Bambara, Jhumpa Lahiri, Sandra Cisneros, and Ted Chiang, hand-selected by celebrated editor and anthologist John Freeman In the past fifty years, the American short story has changed dramatically. New voices, forms, and mixtures of styles have brought this unique genre a thrilling burst of energy. The Penguin Book of the Modern American Short Story celebrates this avalanche of talent. This rich anthology begins in 1970 and brings together a half century of powerful American short stories from all genres, including—for the first time in a collection of this scale—science fiction, horror, and fantasy, placing writers such as Ursula K. Le Guin, Ken Liu, and Stephen King next to some beloved greats of the literary form: Raymond Carver, Grace Paley, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and Denis Johnson. Culling widely, John Freeman, the former editor of *Granta* and now editor of his own literary annual, brings forward some astonishing work to be regarded in a new light. Often overlooked tales by Dorothy Allison, Percival Everett, and Charles Johnson will recast the shape and texture of today's enlarging atmosphere of literary dialogue. Stories by Lauren Groff and Ted Chiang raise the specter of engagement in ecocidal times. Short tales by Tobias Wolff, George Saunders, and Lydia Davis rub shoulders with near novellas by Susan Sontag and Andrew Holleran. This book will be a treasure trove for readers, writers, and teachers alike.

LONGLISTED FOR THE NATIONAL BOOK AWARD • NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY KIRKUS REVIEWS • In this moving, lyrical, and ultimately uplifting collection of essays, Michael Paterniti turns a keen eye on the full range of human experience, introducing us to an unforgettable cast of everyday people. Michael Paterniti is one of the most original and empathic storytellers working today. His writing has been described as “humane, devastating, and beautiful” by Elizabeth Gilbert, “spellbinding” by Anthony Doerr, and “expansive and joyful” by George Saunders. In the seventeen wide-ranging essays collected for the first time in *Love and Other Ways of Dying*, he brings his full literary powers to bear, pondering happiness and grief, memory and the redemptive power of human connection. In the remote Ukranian countryside, Paterniti picks apples (and faces mortality) with a real-life giant; in Nanjing, China, he confronts a distraught jumper on a suicide bridge; in Dodge City, Kansas, he takes up residence at a roadside hotel and sees, firsthand, the ways in which the racial divide turns neighbor against neighbor. In each instance, Paterniti illuminates the full spectrum of human experience, introducing us to unforgettable everyday people and bygone legends, exploring the big ideas and emotions that move us. Paterniti reenacts François Mitterrand's last meal in a rustic dining room in France and drives across America with Albert Einstein's brain in the trunk of his rental car, floating in a Tupperware container. He delves with heartbreaking detail into the aftermath of a plane crash off the coast of Nova Scotia, an earthquake in Haiti, and a tsunami in Japan—and, in searing swirls of language, unearths the complicated, hidden truths these moments of extremity

teach us about our ability to endure, and to love. Michael Paterniti has spent the past two decades grappling with some of our most powerful subjects and incomprehensible events, taking an unflinching point of view that seeks to edify as it resists easy answers. At every turn, his work attempts to make sense of both love and loss, and leaves us with a profound sense of what it means to be human. As he writes in the Introduction to this book, “The more we examine the grooves and scars of this life, the more free and complete we become.” Praise for Michael Paterniti and *Love and Other Ways of Dying* “One of the best books I’ve read all year . . . These pieces are exceptional artifacts of literary journalism.”—Mark O’Connell, *Slate* “These pieces are extraordinary. . . . Journalism elevated beyond its ordinary capacities, well into the realm of literature.”—*Columbia Journalism Review* “A fearless, spellbinding collection of inquiries by a brilliant, globally minded essayist whose writing is magic and whose worldview brims with compassion . . . The size of Michael Paterniti’s curiosity is matched only by the size of his heart.”—Anthony Doerr, author of *All the Light We Cannot See* “Michael Paterniti is a genius.”—Elizabeth Gilbert, author of *The Signature of All Things* “One of the best living practitioners of the art of literary journalism, able to fully elucidate and humanize the everyday and the epic.”—Dave Eggers, author of *The Circle* “In each of these essays, Michael Paterniti unveils life for us, the beauty and heartbreak of it, as we would never see it ourselves but now can never forget it. Paterniti is brilliant—a rare master—and one of my favorite authors on earth.”—Lily King, author of *Euphoria* From the highly acclaimed cult author of *Pastoralia*, comes a novella and short-story collection.

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • WINNER OF THE MAN BOOKER PRIZE The “devastatingly moving” (*People*) first novel from the author of *Tenth of December*: a moving and original father-son story featuring none other than Abraham Lincoln, as well as an unforgettable cast of supporting characters, living and dead, historical and invented Named One of *Paste*’s Best Novels of the Decade • Named One of the Ten Best Books of the Year by *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, and Maureen Corrigan, *NPR* • One of *Time*’s Ten Best Novels of the Year • A *New York Times* Notable Book • One of *O: The Oprah Magazine*’s Best Books of the Year February 1862. The Civil War is less than one year old. The fighting has begun in earnest, and the nation has begun to realize it is in for a long, bloody struggle. Meanwhile, President Lincoln’s beloved eleven-year-old son, Willie, lies upstairs in the White House, gravely ill. In a matter of days, despite predictions of a recovery, Willie dies and is laid to rest in a Georgetown cemetery. “My poor boy, he was too good for this earth,” the president says at the time. “God has called him home.” Newspapers report that a grief-stricken Lincoln returns, alone, to the crypt several times to hold his boy’s body. From that seed of historical truth, George Saunders spins an unforgettable story of familial love and loss that breaks free of its realistic, historical framework into a supernatural realm both hilarious and terrifying. Willie Lincoln finds himself

in a strange purgatory where ghosts mingle, gripe, commiserate, quarrel, and enact bizarre acts of penance. Within this transitional state—called, in the Tibetan tradition, the bardo—a monumental struggle erupts over young Willie’s soul. Lincoln in the Bardo is an astonishing feat of imagination and a bold step forward from one of the most important and influential writers of his generation. Formally daring, generous in spirit, deeply concerned with matters of the heart, it is a testament to fiction’s ability to speak honestly and powerfully to the things that really matter to us. Saunders has invented a thrilling new form that deploys a kaleidoscopic, theatrical panorama of voices to ask a timeless, profound question: How do we live and love when we know that everything we love must end? “A luminous feat of generosity and humanism.”—Colson Whitehead, *The New York Times Book Review* “A masterpiece.”—Zadie Smith

A stunning collection including the story "Sea Oak," from the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of the Man Booker Prize-winning novel *Lincoln in the Bardo* and the story collection *Tenth of December*, a 2013 National Book Award Finalist for Fiction. Hailed by Thomas Pynchon as "graceful, dark, authentic, and funny," George Saunders gives us, in his inventive and beloved voice, this bestselling collection of stories set against a warped, hilarious, and terrifyingly recognizable American landscape.

An inspiring message from the inaugural Folio Prize winner, George Saunders, one of today's most influential and original writers

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • From the Booker Prize-winning author of *Lincoln in the Bardo* and *Tenth of December* comes a literary master class on what makes great stories work and what they can tell us about ourselves—and our world today. NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY *ESQUIRE* • “[A] worship song to writers and readers.”—*Oprah Daily* For the last twenty years, George Saunders has been teaching a class on the Russian short story to his MFA students at Syracuse University. In *A Swim in a Pond in the Rain*, he shares a version of that class with us, offering some of what he and his students have discovered together over the years. Paired with iconic short stories by Chekhov, Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Gogol, the seven essays in this book are intended for anyone interested in how fiction works and why it’s more relevant than ever in these turbulent times. In his introduction, Saunders writes, “We’re going to enter seven fastidiously constructed scale models of the world, made for a specific purpose that our time maybe doesn’t fully endorse but that these writers accepted implicitly as the aim of art—namely, to ask the big questions, questions like, How are we supposed to be living down here? What were we put here to accomplish? What should we value? What is truth, anyway, and how might we recognize it?” He approaches the stories technically yet accessibly, and through them explains how narrative functions; why we stay immersed in a story and why we resist it; and the bedrock virtues a writer must foster. The process of writing, Saunders reminds us, is a technical craft, but also a way of training oneself to see the world with new openness and curiosity. *A Swim in a*

Pond in the Rain is a deep exploration not just of how great writing works but of how the mind itself works while reading, and of how the reading and writing of stories make genuine connection possible.

Essays by popular children's authors reveal the books that shaped their personal and literary lives, explaining how the stories they loved influenced them creatively, politically, and intellectually.

An isolated beach on the island of Guernsey in the English Channel is the scene of the murder of Guy Brouard, one of Guernsey's wealthiest inhabitants and its main benefactor. Forced as a child to flee the Nazis in Paris, Brouard was engaged in his latest project when he died: a museum in honor of those who resisted the German occupation of the island during World War II. It is from this period of time that his murderer may well have come. But there are others on Guernsey with reason to want Guy Brouard dead: his wives, his business associates, his current mistress, the underprivileged teenagers he mentored—any of whom might have harbored a secret motive for murder. As family and friends gather for the reading of the will, Deborah and Simon St. James find that seemingly everyone on the history-haunted island has something to hide. And behind all the lies and alibis, a killer is lurking. In order to bring this person to justice, the St. James must delve into Guernsey's dark history—both past and present—and into the troubled psyche of someone who may have exacted retribution for the most unspeakable crime of all. In *A Place of Hiding*, bestselling novelist Elizabeth George marks new territory in the darker landscapes of human relationships. She tells a gripping, suspenseful story of betrayal and devotion, war and remembrance, love and loss...and the higher truths to which we must all ultimately answer.

A comprehensive look at the promise and potential of online learning In our digital age, students have dramatically new learning needs and must be prepared for the idea economy of the future. In *Getting Smart*, well-known global education expert Tom Vander Ark examines the facets of educational innovation in the United States and abroad. Vander Ark makes a convincing case for a blend of online and onsite learning, shares inspiring stories of schools and programs that effectively offer "personal digital learning" opportunities, and discusses what we need to do to remake our schools into "smart schools." Examines the innovation-driven world, discusses how to combine online and onsite learning, and reviews "smart tools" for learning Investigates the lives of learning professionals, outlines the new employment bargain, examines online universities and "smart schools" Makes the case for smart capital, advocates for policies that create better learning, studies smart cultures

A sports journalist, sent to a Midlands town on a weekly assignment, finds himself confronted by ghosts from the past when he disembarks at the railway station. Memories of one of his best, most trusted friends, a tragically young victim of cancer, begin to flood through his mind as he attempts to go about the routine business of reporting a football match. B S Johnson's famous 'book in a box', in which the chapters are presented unbound, to be read in any order the reader chooses, is one of the key works of a novelist now undergoing an enormous revival of interest. The

Unfortunates is a book of passionate honesty and dark, courageous humour: a meditation on death and a celebration of friendship which also offers a remarkably frank self-portrait of its author.

Six short stories and a novella. Set in a dystopian near-future in which America has become little more than a theme park in terminal disrepair, they constitute a searching and bitterly humorous commentary on the current state of the American Dream.

SuperSummary, a modern alternative to SparkNotes and CliffsNotes, offers high-quality study guides for challenging works of literature. This 88-page guide for "CivilWarLand in Bad Decline" by George Saunders includes detailed story summaries and analysis covering 6 stories, as well as several more in-depth sections of expert-written literary analysis. Featured content includes commentary on major characters, 25 important quotes, essay topics, and key themes like The Dehumanizing Effects of Corporate Culture and The Doom in Ceding to One's Ego.

In the aftermath of a new world war, a former soldier confronts his own morality and its impact on others.

CivilWarLand in Bad Decline Stories and a Novella Random House Trade Paperbacks
This magisterial study, ten years in the making by one of the field's most distinguished historians, will be the first to explore the impact fugitive slaves had on the politics of the critical decade leading up to the Civil War. Through the close reading of diverse sources ranging from government documents to personal accounts, Richard J. M. Blackett traces the decisions of slaves to escape, the actions of those who assisted them, the many ways black communities responded to the capture of fugitive slaves, and how local laws either buttressed or undermined enforcement of the federal law. Every effort to enforce the law in northern communities produced levels of subversion that generated national debate so much so that, on the eve of secession, many in the South, looking back on the decade, could argue that the law had been effectively subverted by those individuals and states who assisted fleeing slaves.

His wife, Norma, has run off with her ex-husband, taking Ray's cards, shotgun and car. But from the receipts, Ray can track where they've gone. He takes off after them, as does an irritatingly tenacious bail bondsman, both following the romantic couple's spending as far as Mexico. There Ray meets Dr Reo Symes, the seemingly down-on-his-luck and rather eccentric owner of a beaten up and broken down bus, who needs a ride to Belize. The further they drive, in a car held together by coat-hangers and excesses of oil, the wilder their journey gets. But they're not going to give up easily. From New York Times bestselling author Catherine Ryan Hyde comes a moving novel about two strangers who find that kindness is a powerful antidote to fear. Raymond Jaffe feels like he doesn't belong. Not with his mother's new family. Not as a weekend guest with his father and his father's wife. Not at school, where he's an outcast. After his best friend moves away, Raymond has only two real connections: to the feral cat he's tamed and to a blind ninety-two-year-old woman in his building who's introduced herself with a curious question: Have you seen Luis Velez? Mildred Gutermann, a German Jew who narrowly escaped the Holocaust, has been alone since her caretaker disappeared. She turns to Raymond for help, and as he tries to track Luis down, a deep and unexpected friendship blossoms between the two. Despondent at the loss of Luis, Mildred isolates herself further from a neighborhood devolving into bigotry and fear. Determined not to let her give up, Raymond helps her see that for every terrible act the

world delivers, there is a mirror image of deep kindness, and Mildred helps Raymond see that there's hope if you have someone to hold on to.

In a brilliant mix of magic, history, and romance, M. K. Hobson moves her feisty young Witch, Emily Edwards, from the Old West of 1876 to turn-of-the-nineteenth-century New York City, whose polished surfaces conceal as much danger as anything west of the Rockies. Like it or not, Emily has fallen in love with Dreadnought Stanton, a New York Warlock as irresistible as he is insufferable. Newly engaged, she now must brave Dreadnought's family and the magical elite of the nation's wealthiest city. Not everyone is pleased with the impending nuptials, especially Emily's future mother-in-law, a sociopathic socialite. But there are greater challenges still: confining couture, sinister Russian scientists, and a deathless Aztec goddess who dreams of plunging the world into apocalypse. With all they must confront, do Emily and Dreadnought have any hope of a happily-ever-after?

Lou Diamond is known for being the best field agent around in the Los Angeles Police Department's elite division, the Office of Special Services. The OSS, quite simply, gets the worst crime jobs on the planet—and Lou Diamond, at one time or another, has seen them all. An ex-tactical assault agent with Special Weapons and Tactics, Diamond has enjoyed a near one hundred percent success rate in solving any crime, anywhere. But when lawyers suddenly end up mysteriously dying at his brother's prestigious law firm, the evidence to be found is wanting in every way. The suspects in Lou Diamond's book are all dirty in some way, but all clear of the suspicion of murder. As the body count continues to grow at the firm he is investigating, so too does Diamond's belief that the murderer at large is killing with a purpose other than personal revenge. Things become more complicated still when he meets one of the firm's most powerful partners, the beautiful and alluring, Linda Baylor. Compelled into a bizarre, sexual relationship with Baylor, Diamond begins to have a terrible suspicion that there is a gray area between sex, trust and blood. And that at the end of the day, nothing is as it seems—and no one is who they claim to be. Lou Diamond comes to understand that the end result of such ambiguity is death.

Through a close-reading of the work of five prominent American postmodernist writers, this book re-evaluates the role of the past in recent American fiction, outlines the development of the postmodernist historical novel and considers the waning influence of postmodernism in contemporary American literature.

From the #1 New York Times bestselling author of *Lincoln in the Bardo*, a darkly comic short story about the unintended consequences unleashed by our quest to tame the natural world—featuring gorgeous black-and-white illustrations by Chelsea Cardinal. Fox 8 has always been known as the daydreamer in his pack, the one his fellow foxes regard with a knowing snort and a roll of the eyes. That is, until he develops a unique skill: He teaches himself to speak “Yuman” by hiding in the bushes outside a house and listening to children’s bedtime stories. The power of language fuels his abundant curiosity about people—even after “danjer” arrives in the form of a new shopping mall that cuts off his food supply, sending Fox 8 on a harrowing quest to help save his pack. Told with his distinctive blend of humor and pathos, Fox 8 showcases the extraordinary imaginative talents of George Saunders, whom *The New York Times* called “the writer for our time.”

THE 2017 MAN BOOKER-SHORTLISTED AUTHOR OF LINCOLN IN THE BARDO In

his first collection, George Saunders' vision of our near future is as black and funny as you can get. He takes us on a trip to the shopping malls and theme parks and environmental hazards that lie just around the chronological corner, introducing us to a gang of misfits and losers struggling to survive in an increasingly haywire world. Bizarre but familiar, fierce but always humane, these are stunningly original stories by a master of the form. 'Saunders is a morally passionate, serious writer, who perfectly expresses the madness of the times we live in. He will be read long after these times have passed' Zadie Smith 'He makes the all-but-impossible look effortless. We're lucky to have him' Jonathan Franzen 'There is no-one better, no-one more essential' Dave Eggers

This timely volume explores the signal contribution George Saunders has made to the development of the short story form in books ranging from *CivilWarLand in Bad Decline* (1996) to *Tenth of December* (2013). The book brings together a team of scholars from around the world to explore topics ranging from Saunders's treatment of work and religion to biopolitics and the limits of the short story form. It also includes an interview with Saunders specially conducted for the volume, and a preliminary bibliography of his published works and critical responses to an expanding and always exciting creative oeuvre. Coinciding with the release of the Saunders' first novel, *Lincoln in the Bardo* (2017), *George Saunders: Critical Essays* is the first book-length consideration of a major contemporary author's work. It is essential reading for anyone interested in twenty-first century fiction.

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALIST • NAMED ONE OF TIME'S TEN BEST FICTION BOOKS OF THE DECADE • NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE DECADE BY ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY AND BUZZFEED • NAMED ONE OF THE TEN BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY People • The New York Times Magazine • NPR • Entertainment Weekly • New York • The Telegraph • BuzzFeed • Kirkus Reviews • BookPage • Shelf Awareness

Includes an extended conversation with David Sedaris

One of the most important and blazingly original writers of his generation, George Saunders is an undisputed master of the short story, and *Tenth of December* is his most honest, accessible, and moving collection yet. In the taut opener, "Victory Lap," a boy witnesses the attempted abduction of the girl next door and is faced with a harrowing choice: Does he ignore what he sees, or override years of smothering advice from his parents and act? In "Home," a combat-damaged soldier moves back in with his mother and struggles to reconcile the world he left with the one to which he has returned. And in the title story, a stunning meditation on imagination, memory, and loss, a middle-aged cancer patient walks into the woods to commit suicide, only to encounter a troubled young boy who, over the course of a fateful morning, gives the dying man a final chance to recall who he really is. A hapless, deluded owner of an antiques store; two mothers struggling to do the right thing; a teenage girl whose idealism is challenged by a brutal brush with reality; a man tormented by a series of pharmaceutical experiments that force him to lust, to love, to kill—the unforgettable characters that populate the pages of *Tenth of December* are vividly and lovingly infused with Saunders's signature blend of exuberant prose, deep humanity, and stylistic innovation. Writing brilliantly and profoundly about class, sex, love, loss, work, despair, and war, Saunders cuts to the core of the contemporary experience. These stories take on the big questions and

explore the fault lines of our own morality, delving into the questions of what makes us good and what makes us human. Unsettling, insightful, and hilarious, the stories in *Tenth of December*—through their manic energy, their focus on what is redeemable in human beings, and their generosity of spirit—not only entertain and delight; they fulfill Chekhov’s dictum that art should “prepare us for tenderness.” **GEORGE SAUNDERS WAS NAMED ONE OF THE 100 MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE IN THE WORLD BY TIME MAGAZINE**

In this, his first collection of essays, Saunders trains his eye on the real world rather than the fictional and reveals it to be brimming with wonderful, marvellous strangeness. As he faces a political and cultural reality saturated with lazy media, false promises and political doublespeak, Saunders invokes the wisdom of American literary heroes Twain, Vonnegut and Barthelme and inspires us to re-examine our assumptions about the world we live in, as we struggle to discover what is really there.

Since its publication in 1996, George Saunders’s debut collection has grown in esteem from a cherished cult classic to a masterpiece of the form, inspiring an entire generation of writers along the way. In six stories and a novella, Saunders hatches an unforgettable cast of characters, each struggling to survive in an increasingly haywire world. With a new introduction by Joshua Ferris and a new author’s note by Saunders himself, this edition is essential reading for those seeking to discover or revisit a virtuosic, disturbingly prescient voice. Praise for George Saunders and *CivilWarLand in Bad Decline* “It’s no exaggeration to say that short story master George Saunders helped change the trajectory of American fiction.”—*The Wall Street Journal* “Saunders’s satiric vision of America is dark and demented; it’s also ferocious and very funny.”—Michiko Kakutani, *The New York Times* “George Saunders is a writer of arresting brilliance and originality, with a sure sense of his material and apparently inexhaustible resources of voice. [*CivilWarLand in Bad Decline*] is scary, hilarious, and unforgettable.”—Tobias Wolff “Saunders makes the all-but-impossible look effortless.”—Jonathan Franzen “Not since Twain has America produced a satirist this funny.”—Zadie Smith “An astoundingly tuned voice—graceful, dark, authentic, and funny—telling just the kinds of stories we need to get us through these times.”—Thomas Pynchon

From the bestselling author of *Tenth of December* comes a splendid new edition of his acclaimed collaboration with the illustrator behind *The Stinky Cheese Man* and *James and the Giant Peach!* Featuring fifty-two haunting and hilarious images, *The Very Persistent Gappers of Frip* is a modern fable for people of all ages that touches on the power of kindness, generosity, compassion, and community. In the seaside village of Frip live three families: the Romos, the Ronsens, and a little girl named Capable and her father. The economy of Frip is based solely on goat’s milk, and this is a problem because the village is plagued by gappers: bright orange, many-eyed creatures the size of softballs that love to attach themselves to goats. When a gapper gets near a goat, it lets out a high-pitched shriek of joy that puts the goats off giving milk, which means that every few hours the children of Frip have to go outside, brush the gappers off their goats, and toss them into the sea. The gappers have always been everyone’s problem, until one day they get a little smarter, and instead of spreading out, they gang up: on Capable’s goats. Free at last of the tyranny of the gappers, will her neighbors rally to help her? Or will they turn their backs, forcing Capable to bear the misfortune alone?

Featuring fifty-two haunting and hilarious illustrations by Lane Smith and a brilliant story by George Saunders that explores universal themes of community and kindness, *The Very Persistent Gappers of Frip* is a rich and resonant story for those that have all and those that have not. Praise for *The Very Persistent Gappers of Frip* “In a perfect world, every child would own a copy of this profound, funny fable. . . . Every adult would own a copy too, and would marvel at how this smart, subversive little book is even deeper and more hilarious than any

child could know.”—Entertainment Weekly “Saunders’s idiosyncratic voice makes an almost perfect accompaniment to children’s book illustrator Smith’s heightened characterizations and slightly surreal backdrops.”—Publishers Weekly “A riveting, funny, and sly new fairy tale.”—Miami Herald

'Saunders is an astoundingly tuned voice - graceful, dark, authentic and funny - telling just the kind of stories we need to get us through these times' Thomas Pynchon In PASTORALIA elements of contemporary life are twisted, merged and amplified into a slightly skewed version of modern America. A couple live and work in a caveman theme-park, where speaking is an instantly punishable offence. A born loser attends a self-help seminar where he is encouraged to rid himself of all the people who are 'crapping in your oatmeal'. And a male exotic dancer and his family are terrorised by their decomposing aunt who visits them with a solemn message from beyond the grave. With an uncanny combination of deadpan naturalism and uproarious humour, George Saunders creates a world that is both indelibly original and yet hauntingly familiar ...

Contains a collection of short satirical works, including "The Red Bow," in which a town is consumed by pet-killing hysteria, and "Bohemians," in which two Eastern European widows attempt to fit into suburban America.

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