

Political Fictions Joan Didion

NATIONAL BESTSELLER • "Didion at her finest" —USA Today • An intricate, fast-paced novel about trying to create a context for democracy and getting hands a little dirty in the process, complete with conspiracies, arms dealing, and assassinations. From the author of *The Year of Magical Thinking* and *Let Me Tell You What I Mean* The narrator introduces Elena McMahon, estranged from a life of celebrity fundraisers and from her powerful West Coast husband, Wynn Janklow, whom she has left, taking Catherine, her daughter, to become a reporter for *The Washington Post*. She finds herself boarding a plane for Florida to see her father. She becomes embroiled in her his business even though "she had trained herself since childhood not to have any interest in what he was doing." It is from this moment that she is caught up in something much larger than she could have imagined. Didion makes connections among Dallas, Iran-Contra, and Castro, and points out how "spectral companies with high-concept names tended to interlock." As this book builds to its terrifying finish, we see the underpinnings of a dark historical underbelly.

From the bestselling, award-winning author of *The Year of Magical Thinking* and *Let Me Tell You What I Mean*—a gorgeously written, bitterly funny look at the relationship between politics and personal life. Moving deftly between romance, farce, and tragedy, from 1970s America to Vietnam to Jakarta, *Democracy* is a tour de force from a writer who can dissect an entire society with a single phrase. Inez Victor knows that the major casualty of the political life is memory. But the people around Inez have made careers out of losing track. Her senator husband wants to forget the failure of his last bid for the presidency. Her husband's handler would like the press to forget that Inez's father is a murderer. And, in 1975, America is doing its best to lose track of its one-time client, the lethally hemorrhaging republic of South Vietnam. As conceived by Joan Didion, these personages and events constitute the terminal fallout of democracy, a fallout that also includes fact-finding junkets, senatorial groupies, the international arms market, and the Orwellian newspeak of the political class.

An incisive compilation of political essays, originally written for *The New York Review of Books* from 1988 to 2000, explores the nature of American politics and political figures and the role of the media in transforming the American political landscape. Reprint. 35,000 first printing.

An astonishing account of Cuban exiles, CIA informants, and cocaine traffickers in Florida by the *New York Times*–bestselling author of *South and West*. In Miami, the National Book Award–winning author of *The Year of Magical Thinking* looks beyond postcard images of fluorescent waters, backlit islands, and pastel architecture to explore the murkier waters of a city on the edge. From Fidel Castro and the Bay of Pigs invasion to Lee Harvey Oswald and the Kennedy assassination to Oliver North and the Iran–Contra affair, Joan Didion uncovers political intrigues and shadowy underworld connections, and documents the US government’s “seduction and betrayal” of the Cuban exile community in Dade County. She writes of hotels that offer “guerrilla discounts,” gun shops that advertise Father’s Day deals, and a real-estate market where “Unusual Security and Ready Access to the Ocean” are perks for wealthy homeowners looking to make a quick escape. With a booming drug trade, staggering racial and class inequities, and skyrocketing murder rates, Miami in the 1980s felt more like a Third World capital than a modern American city. Didion describes the violence, passion, and paranoia of these troubled times in arresting detail and “beautifully evocative prose” (*The New York Times Book Review*). A vital report on an immigrant community traumatized by broken dreams and the cynicism of US foreign policy, Miami is a masterwork of literary journalism whose insights are timelier and more important than ever.

The Last Thing He Wanted

The Book of common prayer

American Contemporaries

From a Notebook

A Biography of Joan Didion

Vagabond Dreams

Stupid is the new smart—but it wasn’ t always so Popular culture has divorced itself from the life of the mind. Who has time for great books or deep thought when there is Jersey Shore to watch, a txt 2 respond 2, and World of Warcraft to play? At the same time, those who pursue the life of the mind have insulated themselves from popular culture. Speaking in insider jargon and writing unread books, intellectuals have locked themselves away in a ghetto of their own creation. It wasn’ t always so. *Blue Collar Intellectuals* vividly captures a time in the twentieth century when the everyman aspired, and when intellectuals descended from the ivory tower to speak to the everyman. Author Daniel J. Flynn profiles thinkers from working-class backgrounds who played a prominent role in American life by addressing their intellectual work to a mass audience. *Blue Collar Intellectuals* shows us how much everyone—intellectual and everyman alike—has suffered from mass culture ’ s crowding out of higher things and the elite ’ s failure to engage the masses.

In this latest foray into the ailing American psyche, Joan Didion takes her scalpel to inauthenticity and dogma, and lays bare the discrepancies between urban realities and the images peddled by America’s attendant quack doctors. Like its great predecessors, ‘Slouching Towards Bethlehem’ and ‘The White Album’, ‘Sentimental Journeys’ is a thoroughly astringent, bracing report on the State of the Union.

Discusses the rhetoric and media strategies of George W. Bush following the September 11th terrorist attacks.

In this moving and unexpected book, Joan Didion reassesses parts of her life, her work, her history, and ours. Where I Was From, in Didion ’ s words, “ represents an exploration into my own confusions about the place and the way in which I grew up, confusions as much about America as about California, misapprehensions and misunderstandings so much a part of who I became that I can still to this day confront them only obliquely. ” The book is a haunting narrative of how her own family moved west with the frontier from the birth of her great-great-great-great-grandmother in Virginia in 1766 to the death of her mother on the edge of the Pacific in 2001; of how the wagon-train stories of hardship and abandonment and endurance created a culture in which survival would seem the sole virtue. In *Where I Was From*, Didion turns what John Leonard has called “ her sonar ear, her radar eye ” onto her own work, as well as that of such California writers as Frank Norris and Jack London and Henry George, to examine how the folly and recklessness in the very grain of the California settlement led to the California we know today – a state mortgaged first to the railroad, then to the aerospace industry, and overwhelmingly to the federal government, a dependent colony of those political and corporate owners who fly in for the annual encampment of the Bohemian Club. Here is the one writer we always want to read on California showing us the startling contradictions in its – and in America ’ s – core values. Joan Didion ’ s unerring sense of America and its spirit, her acute interpretation of its institutions and literature, and her incisive questioning of the stories it tells itself make this fiercely intelligent book a provocative and important tour de force from one of our greatest writers. From the Hardcover edition.

from Political Fictions

Salvador

Collected Nonfiction

And Esther, Two Novels

Run River / Slouching Towards Bethlehem / Play It As It Lays / A Book of Common Prayer / The White Album

America Since 9.11

NATIONAL BESTSELLER • NATIONAL BOOK AWARD WINNER • From one of America’s iconic writers, a stunning book of electric honesty and passion that explores an intensely personal yet universal experience: a portrait of a marriage—and a life, in good times and bad—that will speak to anyone who has ever loved a husband or wife or child. Several days before Christmas 2003, John Gregory Dunne and Joan Didion saw their only daughter, Quintana, fall ill with what seemed at first flu, then pneumonia, then complete septic shock. She was put into an induced coma and placed on life support. Days later—the night before New Year’s Eve—the Dunes were just sitting down to dinner after visiting the hospital when John Gregory Dunne suffered a massive and fatal coronary. In a second, this close, symbiotic partnership of forty years was over. Four weeks later, their daughter pulled through. Two months after that, arriving at LAX, she collapsed and underwent six hours of brain surgery at UCLA Medical Center to relieve a massive hematoma. This powerful book is Didion’ s attempt to make sense of the “weeks and then months that cut loose any fixed idea I ever had about death, about illness ... about marriage and children and memory ... about the shallowness of sanity, about life itself.

The KGB grooms a long-lost Kennedy for an explosive assignment in this thriller by an ex-CIA agent and *New York Times*–bestselling spy novelist. Although in the mid-1940s no one had ever heard of JFK, Jack Adams's mother insisted her new son be christened John Fitzgerald. Years after his parents' death, Jack learns the reason for his name: a packet of photos showing his mother in bed with young John Kennedy. As a student at Columbia University, Jack demonstrates that he inherited more than JFK’s good looks. His irresistible charisma and political instinct make him a natural campus leader, but he has his sights set on something bigger than the student council. Young Jack Adams wants to be president of the United States, and the Soviet Union is prepared to help. A KGB spy named Dmitri recruits Jack, promising him the presidency in exchange for treason. Dmitri guides Jack for decades, putting him in a position to become the largest intelligence coup in history—unless the candidate’s libido derails him first.

"Tracy Daugherty delves deep into the life of distinguished American author and journalist Joan Didion in this, the first printed biography published about her life. Joan Didion lived a life in the public and private eye with her late husband, writer John Gregory Dunne. Daugherty takes readers on a journey back through time, following a young Didion in Sacramento, through to her adult life as a writer interviewing those who know and knew her personally, while maintaining a respectful distance from the reclusive literary great." -- The iconic writer’s electrifying first novel is a story of marriage, murder and betrayal that only she could tell with such nuance, sympathy, and suspense—from the bestselling, award-winning author of *The Year of Magical Thinking* and *Let Me Tell You What I Mean*.

Everett McClellan and his wife, Lily, are the great-grandchildren of pioneers, and what happens to them is a tragic epilogue to the pioneer experience—a haunting portrait of a marriage whose wrong turns and betrayals are at once absolutely idiosyncratic and a razor-sharp commentary on the history of California.

Social and Political Landscape of El Salvador

Blue Collar Intellectuals

Conversations with Joan Didion

Insider Baseball

When the Enlightened and the Everyman Elevated America

Miami

New York Times Bestseller: An “elegant” mosaic of trenchant observations on the late sixties and seventies from the author of *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* (The New Yorker). In this landmark essay collection, Joan Didion brilliantly interweaves her own “bad dreams” with those of a nation confronting the dark underside of 1960s counterculture. From a jailhouse visit to Black Panther Party cofounder Huey Newton to witnessing First Lady of California Nancy Reagan pretend to pick flowers for the benefit of news cameras, Didion captures the paranoia and absurdity of the era with her signature blend of irony and insight. She takes readers to the “giddily splendid” Getty Museum in Los Angeles, the cool mountains of Bogotá, and the Jordanian Desert, where Bishop James Pike went to walk in Jesus’s footsteps—and died not far from his rented Ford Cortina. She anatomizes the culture of shopping malls—“toy garden cities in which no one lives but everyone consumes”—and exposes the contradictions and compromises of the women’s movement. In the iconic title essay, she documents her uneasy state of mind during the years leading up to and following the Manson murders—a terrifying crime that, in her memory, surprised no one. Written in “a voice like no other in contemporary journalism.” *The White Album* is a masterpiece of literary reportage and a fearless work of autobiography by the National Book Award–winning author of *The Year of Magical Thinking* (The New York Times Book Review). Its power to electrify and inform remains undiminished nearly forty years after it was first published.

An Amazon Best Book of 2016 A celebration of the writing and editing life, as well as a look behind the scenes at some of the most influential magazines in America (and the writers who made them what they are). You might not know Terry McDonell, but you certainly know his work. Among the magazines he’s known and edited over the years, what the magazine business was like back then, how it’s changed and where it’s going, inside info about Edward Abbey, Jim Harrison, Annie Proulx, old New York, and the Swimsuit issue. That dinner is this book.” he’s known are both heartbreaking and bitingly funny—playing “acid golf” with Hunter S. Thompson, practicing brinkmanship with David Carr and Steve Jobs, working the European fashion scene with Liz Tilberis, pitching TV pilots with Richard Price. Here, too, is an expert’s practical advice on how to recruit—and keep—high-profile talent; what makes a compelling lede; how to grow online traffic that translates into dollars; and how, in whatever format, on whatever platform, a good editor really works, and what it takes to write well. Taking us from the raucous days of *New Journalism* to today’s digital landscape, McDonell argues that the need for clear storytelling from trustworthy news sources has never been stronger. Says Jeffrey Eugenides: “Every time I run into Terry, I think how great it would be to have dinner with him. Hear about the writers he’s known and edited over the years, what the magazine business was like back then, how it’s changed and where it’s going, inside info about Edward Abbey, Jim Harrison, Annie Proulx, old New York, and the Swimsuit issue. That dinner is this book.”

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.

A definitive compilation of essays and nonfiction writings spanning more than forty years includes the author’s reflections on politics, lifestyle, place, and cultural figures, including her studies of Haight-Ashbury, the Manson family, the Black Panthers, California earthquakes, Bill Clinton and Kenneth Starr, and much more.

Collected Essays

Uncovering Clinton

Where I Was From

Slouching Towards Bethlehem, The White Album, and After Henry

The Accidental Life

Lucky Bastard

NATIONAL BESTSELLER • In these coolly observant essays, the iconic bestselling writer looks at the American political process and at "that handful of insiders who invent, year in and year out, the narrative of public life." Through the deconstruction of the sound bites and photo of presidential campaigns, one presidential impeachment, and an unforgettable sex scandal, Didion reveals the mechanics of American politics. She tells us the uncomfortable truth about the way we vote, the candidates we vote for, and the people who tell us to vote for them. The other, into a disturbing portrait of the American political landscape, providing essential reading on our democracy.

"Vagabond Dreams" is a true story of awakening among a cast of fascinating characters at the farthest margins of the map. At its heart is the uncompromising vision of rising beyond one's self-imposed limitations and truly living. This powerful map to Road Wisdom is for brave embrace personal freedom and create the life of their choice.

A shimmering novel of innocence and evil: the gripping story of two American women in a failing Central American nation, from the bestselling, award-winning author of *The Year of Magical Thinking* and *Let Me Tell You What I Mean* "[Didion's] most ambitious project in fiction, and ... glows with a golden aura of well-wrought classical tragedy." —Los Angeles Times Book Review Grace Strasser-Mendana controls much of Boca Grande's wealth and knows virtually all of its secrets: Charlotte Douglas knows far too little. "Immaculate of history, innocent of pol come to Boca Grande vaguely and vainly hoping to be reunited with her fugitive daughter. As imagined by Didion, her fate is at once utterly particular and fearfully emblematic of an age of conscienceless authority and unfathomable violence. *A Book of Common Prayer* is written with swiftness and microscopic sensitivity that have made Didion one of our most distinguished journalists.

Three essential works that redefined the art of journalism by “one of our sharpest and most trustworthy cultural observers” (*The New York Times*). In these masterpieces of razor-sharp reportage, the National Book Award–winning and *New York Times*–bestselling author proves h premier essayists of the twentieth century, “an articulate witness to the most stubborn and intractable truths of our time” (Joyce Carol Oates, *The New York Times Book Review*). *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*: America in the 1960s—a pivotal era of social change and generation Didion on the “misplaced children” of Haight-Ashbury as well as John Wayne in Hollywood: folk singer Joan Baez and reclusive billionaire Howard Hughes: the extremes of both Death Valley and Las Vegas. Named to *Time* magazine’s list of the one hundred best and most influential books, this is “a rare display of some of the best prose written today in this country” (*The New York Times Book Review*). *The White Album*: A *New York Times* bestseller, this landmark essay collection confronts the dark aftermath of the 1960s. From a jailhouse visit to Huey New Black Panther Party, to a recording session with *The Doors*, from the culture of shopping malls to the contradictions of the women’s movement, Joan Didion captures the paranoia and absurdity of the era with irony and insight. And in the iconic title essay, she documents her ur during the years leading up to and following the Manson murders—a terrifying crime that, in her memory, surprised no one. *After Henry*: Whether reporting on a Hollywood murder or the “sideshows” of foreign wars, Joan Didion crystallizes her reputation as a brilliant essayist. Hi portrait of the White House under the Reagans, two “actors on location”: an unexpected meditation on the Patty Hearst case; and an exposé on the racial divisions and class fault lines of New York City following the rape of the Central Park jogger. An indispensable collection fro we can rely “to get the story straight” (*Los Angeles Times*).

Sentimental Journeys

The Hero And the Blues

Run River

A Reporter’s Story

Let Me Tell You What I Mean

The White Album

"I realized something that should have been apparent to me much earlier: I was in the middle of a plot to get the president." A quarter of a century after Woodward and Bernstein's history-making expose *All the President's Men* stunned the nation by capturing the Nixon presidency in the throes of turmoil, Newsweek reporter Michael Isikoff gives us an equally explosive and surprisingly suspenseful behind-the-scenes account of his investigative role in the scandals that have rocked President Clinton's second term and led to the historic vote for impeachment that will define his presidency. Isikoff, who is credited with breaking the Paula Jones, Kathleen Willey and Monica Lewinsky stories, is universally acknowledged as the leading reporter who brought to light the incredible revelations about Clinton's personal and political lives that have consumed this country and shocked the world. As a reporter for the *Washington Post* and *Newsweek*, Isikoff has established himself as an astute observer and chronicler of Clinton's conduct throughout his presidency, following a trail of presidential misconduct from Little Rock, Arkansas, to the Oval Office. But Isikoff also unwittingly became a primary character in the unfolding Clinton drama. This is a story only he could tell, a gripping narrative of how one journalist went from battling skeptical editors and a formidable White House spin machine in his quest for the truth about Clinton to becoming a central participant in one of the biggest scandals in American political history. Featuring a cast of bizarre characters who make this book as entertaining to read as a novel, *Uncovering Clinton* is also a nuanced and scrupulously fair account with a wealth of never-before-told information about the major players and events in the Clinton scandals, including: The real reasons why some *Washington Post* reporters and editors believed Paula Jones's story from the start--and why Isikoff's story nonetheless was later killed before it ran. How George Stephanopolous covered for Clinton as Isikoff pursued the Paula Jones story. How Lucianne Goldberg's private notebook and tapes of her phone calls with Linda Tripp show that while Tripp was crying "victim" to the press, she was really plotting to bring down the president and betray Monica Lewinsky--and write a book about it all. The real truth behind Hillary Clinton's oft-cited "vast right-wing conspiracy"--a coterie of right-wing lawyers known as "the elves" who secretly wrote the Jones legal briefs and arranged to bring the Lewinsky story to Ken Starr's office and to public light. How Linda Tripp manipulated Ken Starr's prosecutors into launching a criminal investigation into the Lewinsky matter while withholding critical information, including her repeated contacts with Isikoff. Isikoff had no agenda when he started investigating President Clinton's conduct other than to get at the truth. Now, after accomplishing a remarkable case of journalistic detective work, Isikoff gives us something even more significant: a work that illuminates the psychologically troubling behavior of a president, an Administration that has enabled his actions, a motley crew of Clinton-haters who would stop at nothing to topple the president, and a rapidly changing media grappling with the ever-shifting boundaries between public and private behavior. *Uncovering Clinton* will surely be the definitive account of our nation's biggest political scandal since Watergate.

A NEW YORK TIMES NOTABLE BOOK OF THE YEAR • NEW YORK TIMES BEST SELLER • From one of our most iconic and influential writers, the award-winning author of *The Year of Magical Thinking*: a timeless collection of mostly early pieces that reveal what would become Joan Didion's subjects, including the press, politics, California robber barons, women, and her own self-doubt. With a forward by Hilton Als, these twelve pieces from 1968 to 2000, never before gathered together, offer an illuminating glimpse into the mind and process of a legendary figure. They showcase Joan Didion's incisive reporting, her empathetic gaze, and her role as "an articulate witness to the most stubborn and intractable truths of our time" (*The New York Times Book Review*). Here, Didion touches on topics ranging from newspapers ("the problem is not so much whether one trusts the news as to whether one finds it"), to the fantasy of San Simeon, to not getting into Stanford. In "Why I Write," Didion ponders the act of writing: "I write entirely to find out what I'm thinking, what I'm looking at, what I see and what it means." From her admiration for Hemingway's sentences to her acknowledgment that Martha Stewart's story is one "that has historically encouraged women in this country, even as it has threatened men," these essays are acutely and brilliantly observed. Each piece is classic Didion: incisive, bemused, and stunningly prescient.

Political FictionsVintage

From one of our most iconic and influential writers: twelve pieces that offer an illuminating glimpse into the mind and process of a legendary figure. These essays from 1968 to 2000, which have not been gathered together until now, showcase Joan Didion's incisive reporting, her empathetic gaze, and her insights on writing. They touch on subjects ranging from newspapers ("the problem is not so much whether one trusts the news as whether one finds it"), to the fantasy of San Simeon, to not getting into Stanford. In "On Being Unchosen by the College of One's Choice," Didion ponders the fraught parent/child dilemma: "I wonder if we had better not find some way ... to extricate our expectations from theirs...to let them work through their own rejections." From her admiration for Hemingway's sentences to her acknowledgement that Martha Stewart's story is one "that has historically encouraged women in this country, even as it has threatened men," these pieces are acutely and brilliantly observed. This timeless collection of Didion's mostly early writing reveals what would become her subjects, including the press, politics, California robber barons, women, the act of writing, and her own self-doubt. Each piece is classic Didion: incisive, bemused, and stunningly prescient--From dust jacket.

Joan Didion: The 1960s & 70s (LOA #325)

Vintage Didion

True Believers

The Lost Art of Reading

Democracy

South and West

Analyzes scandals in high-profile institutions, from Wall Street and the Catholic Church to corporate America and Major League Baseball, while evaluating how an elite American meritocracy rose throughout the past half-century before succumbing to unprecedented levels of corruption and failure. 75,000 first printing.

Withdrawing herself from consideration for Supreme Court Judgeship, distinguished judge Karen Hollander reflects on the reasons for her decision while remembering her coming of age in 1960s America, during which she experienced a formative event that reverberates in the cultural landscape of her present-day life. By the best-selling author of Heyday. 40,000 first printing.

The author recounts her 1982 visit to El Salvador and describes the terror, fear and political repression that permeated the country

Incisive essays on Patty Hearst and Reagan, the Central Park jogger and the Santa Ana winds, from the New York Times–bestselling author of South and West. In these eleven essays covering the national scene from Washington, DC; California; and New York, the acclaimed author of Slouching Towards Bethlehem and The White Album “capture[s] the mood of America” and confirms her reputation as one of our sharpest and most trustworthy cultural observers (The New York Times). Whether dissecting the 1988 presidential campaign, exploring the commercialization of a Hollywood murder, or reporting on the “sideshows” of foreign wars, Joan Didion proves that she is one of the premier essayists of the twentieth century, “an articulate witness to the most stubborn and intractable truths of our time” (Joyce Carol Oates, The New York Times Book Review). Highlights include “In the Realm of the Fisher King,” a portrait of the White House under the stewardship of Ronald and Nancy Reagan, two “actors on location;” and “Girl of the Golden West,” a meditation on the Patty Hearst case that draws an unexpected and insightful parallel between the kidnapped heiress and the emigrants who settled California. “Sentimental Journeys” is a deeply felt study of New York media coverage of the brutal rape of a white investment banker in Central Park, a notorious crime that exposed the city’s racial and class fault lines. Dedicated to Henry Robbins, Didion’s friend and editor from 1966 until his death in 1979, After Henry is an indispensable collection of “superior reporting and criticism” from a writer on whom we have relied for more than fifty years “to get the story straight” (Los Angeles Times).

Fixed Ideas

Joan Didion

Slouching Towards Bethlehem

Why Books Matter in a Distracted Time

A Book of Common Prayer

An Editor’s Notes on Writing and Writers

This collection of beautiful, enduring hardcover editions features modern American masterpieces, including works by Nobel Prize and National Book Award winners. With elegant cloth sewn bindings, gold stamped covers, and silk ribbon markers, these classics are an essential for any home library. Titles included: Beloved by Toni Morrison The Border Trilogy by Cormac McCarthy Rabbit Angstrom by John Updike Revolutionary Road; The Easter Parade; Eleven Kinds of Loneliness by Richard Yates We Tell Ourselves Stories in Order to Live by Joan Didion

In this visionary book, Murray takes an audacious new look at black music and, in the process, succeeds in changing the way one reads literature. Murray’s subject is the previously unacknowledged kinship between fiction and the blues. Both, he argues, are virtuoso performances that impart information, wisdom, and moral guidance to their audiences; both place a high value on improvisation; and both fiction and the blues create a delicate balance between the holy and the obscene, essential human values and cosmic absurdity. Encompassing artists from Ernest Hemingway to Duke Ellington, and from Thomas Mann to Richard Wright, The Hero and the Blues pays homage to a new black aesthetic.

NATIONAL BESTSELLER • “One of contemporary literature’s most revered essayists revives her raw records from a 1970s road trip across the American southwest ... her acute observations of the country’s culture and history feel particularly resonant today.” —Harper’s Bazaar Joan Didion, the bestselling, award-winning author of The Year of Magical Thinking and Let Me Tell You What I Mean, has always kept notebooks—of overheard dialogue, interviews, drafts of essays, copies of articles. Here are two extended excerpts from notebooks she kept in the 1970s; read together, they form a piercing view of the American political and cultural landscape. “Notes on the South” traces a road trip that she and her husband, John Gregory Dunne, took through Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. Her acute observations about the small towns they pass through, her interviews with local figures, and their preoccupation with race, class, and heritage suggest a South largely unchanged today. “California Notes” began as an assignment from Rolling Stone on the Patty Hearst trial. Though Didion never wrote the piece, the time she spent watching the trial in San Francisco triggered thoughts about the West and her own upbringing in Sacramento. Here we not only see Didion’s signature irony and imagination in play, we’re also granted an illuminating glimpse into her mind and process. This enhanced eBook edition of Blue Nights includes three short films directed by Griffin Dunne and starring Joan Didion. Each film blends Didion’s incisive prose with images and mementos from her daughter’s life. From one of our most powerful writers, Blue Nights is a work of stunning frankness about losing a daughter. Richly textured with bits of her own childhood and married life with her husband, John Gregory Dunne, and daughter, Quintana Roo, this new book by Joan Didion examines her thoughts, fears, and doubts regarding having children, illness, and growing old. Blue Nights opens on July 26, 2010, as Didion thinks back to Quintana’s wedding in New York seven years before. Today would be her wedding anniversary. This fact triggers vivid snapshots of Quintana’s childhood—in Malibu, in Brentwood, at school in Holmby Hills. Reflecting on her daughter but also on her role as a parent, Didion asks the candid questions any parent might about how she feels she failed either because cues were not taken or perhaps displaced. “How could I have missed what was clearly there to be seen?” Finally, perhaps we all remain unknown to each other. Seamlessly woven in are incidents Didion sees as underscoring her own age, something she finds hard to acknowledge, much less accept. Blue Nights—the long, light evening hours that signal the summer solstice, “the opposite of the dying of the brightness, but also its warning”—like The Year of Magical Thinking before it, is an iconic book of incisive and electric honesty, haunting and profoundly moving.

We Tell Ourselves Stories in Order to Live

Essays

Substance and Style

After Henry

Political Fictions

The Last Love Song

A Vintage Shorts Selection • Almost three decades ago, iconic and incomparable American essayist Joan Didion’s now-classic report from the Dukakis campaign trail exposed, in no uncertain terms, the complete sham that is the modern American presidential run. Writing with bite and some humor too, Didion betrays “the process”—the way in which power is exchanged and the status quo is maintained. All insiders—politicians, journalists, spin doctors—participate in a political narrative that is “designed as it is to maintain the illusion of consensus by obscuring rather than addressing actual issues.” The optics of presidential campaigns have grown ever more farcical and remote from the needs and issues most relevant to Americans’ lives, and Didion’s elegant, shrewd, and prescient commentary has never been more urgent than it is right now. An ebook short.

The “dazzling” and essential portrayal of 1960s America from the author of South and West and The Year of Magical Thinking (The New York Times). Capturing the tumultuous landscape of the United States, and in particular California, during a pivotal era of social change, the first work of nonfiction from one of American literature’s most distinctive prose stylists is a modern classic. In twenty razor-sharp essays that redefined the art of journalism, National Book Award-winning author Joan Didion reports on a society gripped by a deep generational divide, from the “misplaced children” dropping acid in San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury district to Hollywood legend John Wayne filming his first picture after a bout with cancer. She paints indelible portraits of reclusive billionaire Howard Hughes and folk singer Joan Baez, “a personality before she was entirely a person,” and takes readers on eye-opening journeys to Death Valley, Hawaii, and Las Vegas, “the most extreme and allegorical of American settlements.” First published in 1968, Slouching Towards Bethlehem has been heralded by the New York Times Book Review as “a rare display of some of the best prose written today in this country” and named to Time magazine’s list of the one hundred best and most influential nonfiction books. It is the definitive account of a terrifying and transformative decade in American history whose discordant reverberations continue to sound a half-century later.

Joan Didion (b. 1934) is an American icon. Her essays, particularly those in Slouching Towards Bethlehem and The White Album, have resonated in American culture to a degree unmatched over the past half century. Two generations of writers have taken her as the measure of what it means to write personal essays. No one writes about California, the sixties, media narratives, cultural mythology, or migraines without taking Didion into account. She has also written five novels; several screenplays with her husband, John Gregory Dunne; and three late-in-life memoirs, including The Year of Magical Thinking and Blue Nights, which have brought her a new wave of renown. Conversations with Joan Didion features seventeen interviews with the author, spanning decades, continents, and genres. Didion reflects on her childhood in Sacramento; her time at Berkeley (both as a student and later as a visiting professor), in New York, and in Hollywood; her marriage to Dunne; and of course her writing. Didion describes her methods of writing, the ways in which the various genres she has worked in inform one another, and the concerns that have motivated her to write.

Library of America launches a definitive collected edition of one of the most original and electric writers of our time with a volume gathering her five iconic books of the 1960s & 70s Joan Didion’s influence on postwar American letters is undeniable. Whether writing fiction, memoir, or trailblazing journalism, her gifts for narrative and dialogue, and her intimate but detached authorial persona, have won her legions of readers and admirers. Now Library of America launches its multi-volume edition of Didion’s collected writings, prepared in consultation with the author, that brings together her fiction and nonfiction for the first time. Collected in this first volume are Didion’s five iconic books from the 1960s and 1970s: Run River, Slouching Towards Bethlehem, Play It As It Lays, A Book of Common Prayer, and The White Album. Whether writing about countercultural San Francisco, the Las Vegas wedding industry, Lucille Miller, Charles Manson, or the shopping mall, Didion achieves a wonderful negative sublimity without condemning her subjects or condescending to her readers. Chiefly about California, these books display Didion’s genius for finding exactly the right language and tone to capture America’s broken twilight landscape at a moment of headlong conflict and change.

Road Wisdom from Central America

The Year of Magical Thinking

America After Meritocracy

Twilight of the Elites

Blue Nights (Enhanced Edition)

The perfect introduction to one of our greatest modern writers: Joan Didion "has the instincts of an exceptional reporter and the focus of a historian, [with] a novelist’s appreciation of the surreal" (Los Angeles Times Book Review). Whether she’s writing about civil war in Central America, political scurrility in Washington, or the tightly-braided myths and realities of her native California, Joan Didion expresses an unblinking vision of the truth. Vintage Didion includes three chapters from Miami; an excerpt from Salvador; and three separate essays from After Henry that cover topics from Ronald Reagan to the Central Park jogger case. Also included is “Clinton Agonistes” from Political Fictions, and “Fixed Opinions, or the Hinge of History,” a scathing analysis of the ongoing war on terror.

Explores how Didion’s nonfiction prose style, often lauded for being beautiful and poetic, also works rhetorically. Much acclaimed and often imitated, Joan Didion remains one of the leading American essayists and political journalists of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The lone woman writer among the New Journalists in the 1960s and ’70s, Didion became a powerful critic of public and political mythologies in the ’80s and ’90s, and was an inspiration for those, particularly women, dealing with aging and grief and loss in the early 2000s. An iconic figure, Didion is still much admired by readers, critics, and essayists, who speak of looking to her prose style as a model for their own. In Joan Didion: Substance and Style, Kathleen M. Vandenberg explores how Didion’s nonfiction prose style, often lauded for its beauty and poetry, also works rhetorically. Through close readings of selected nonfiction from the last forty years—biographically, culturally, and politically situated—Vandenberg reveals how Didion deliberately and powerfully employs style to emphasize her point of view and enchant her readers. While Didion continues to publish and the “Cult of Joan,” as one author calls it, grows seemingly stronger by the day, this book is the only extended treatment of Didion’s later nonfiction and the first sustained and close consideration of how her essays work at the level of the sentence. Kathleen M. Vandenberg is Senior Lecturer in Rhetoric at Boston University.

A Novel