halls of fame essays john dagata

Halls of Fame - Essays

"John D'Agata is an alchemist who changes trash into purest gold." —Guy Davenport, Harper's

John D'Agata journeys the endless corridors of America's myriad halls of fame and faithfully
reports on what he finds there. In a voice all his own, he brilliantly maps his terrain in lists,
collage, and ludic narratives. With topics ranging from Martha Graham to the Flat Earth Society,
from the brightest light in Vegas to the artist Henry Darger, who died in obscurity, Halls of Fame
hovers on the brink between prose and poetry, deep seriousness and high comedy, the subject
and the self.

The Making of the American Essay

For two decades, essayist John D'Agata has been exploring the contours of the essay through a
series of innovative, informative, and expansive anthologies that have become foundational
texts in the study of the genre. The breakthrough first volume, The Next American Essay,
highlighted major work from 1974 to 2003, while the second, The Lost Origins of the Essay,
showcased the essay's ancient and international forebears. Now, with The Making of the
American Essay, D'Agata concludes his monumental tour of this inexhaustible form, with
selections ranging from Anne Bradstreet's secular prayers to Washington Irving's satires, Emily
Dickinson's love letters to Kenneth Goldsmith's catalogues, Gertrude Stein's portraits to James
Baldwin's and Norman Mailer's meditations on boxing. Across the anthologies, D'Agata's
introductions to each selection-intimate and brilliantly provocative throughout-serve as an
extended treatise, collectively forming the backbone of the trilogy. He uncovers new stories in
the American essay's past, and shows us that some of the most fiercely daring writers in the
American literary canon have turned to the essay in order to produce our culture's most
exhilarating art. The Making of the American Essay offers the essay at its most varied, unique,
and imaginative best, proving that the impulse to make essays in America is as old and as
original as the nation itself.

The Next American Essay

In The Next American Essay, John D'Agata takes a literary tour of lyric essays written by the
masters of the craft. Beginning with 1975 and John McPhee's ingenious piece, "The Search for
Marvin Gardens," D'Agata selects an example of creative nonfiction for each subsequent year.
These essays are unrestrained, elusive, explosive, mysterious—a personal lingual playground.
They encompass and illuminate culture, myth, history, romance, and sex. Each essay is a world
of its own, a world so distinctive it resists definition. Contributors include: Sherman Alexie David
Antin Jenny Boully Anne Carson Guy Davenport Lydia Davis Joan Didion Annie Dillard Thalia
Field Albert Goldbarth Susan Griffin Theresa Hak Kung Cha Jamaica Kincaid Wayne
Koestenbaum Barry Lopez John McPhee Carole Maso Harry Mathews Susan Mitchell Fabio
Morabito Mary Ruefle David Shields Dennis Silk Susan Sontag Alexander Theroux George W.
S. Trow David Foster Wallace Eliot Weinberger Joe Wenderoth James Wright
About a Mountain

Named One of the 100 Best Nonfiction Books Written by the New York Times Magazine, a Publishers Weekly Best Book of the Year, and a New York Times Editors' Choice. When John D'Agata helps his mother move to Las Vegas one summer, he begins to follow a story about the federal government's plan to store nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain; the result is a startling portrait that compels a reexamination of the future of human life.

The Lifespan of a Fact - Now a Broadway Play

NOW A BROADWAY PLAY STARRING DANIEL RADCLIFFE 'Provocative, maddening and compulsively readable' Maggie Nelson In 2003, American essayist John D'Agata wrote a piece for Harper's about Las Vegas's alarmingly high suicide rate, after a sixteen-year-old boy had thrown himself from the top of the Stratosphere Tower. The article he delivered, 'What Happens There', was rejected by the magazine for inaccuracies. But it was soon picked up by another, who assigned it a fact checker: their fresh-faced intern, and recent Harvard graduate, Jim Fingal. What resulted from that assignment, and beyond the essay's eventual publication in the magazine, was seven years of arguments, negotiations, and revisions as D'Agata and Fingal struggled to navigate the boundaries of literary nonfiction. This book includes an early draft of D'Agata's essay, along with D'Agata and Fingal's extensive discussion around the text. The Lifespan of a Fact is a brilliant and eye-opening meditation on the relationship between 'truth' and 'accuracy', and a penetrating conversation about whether it is appropriate for a writer to substitute one for the other. 'A fascinating and dramatic power struggle over the intriguing question of what nonfiction should, or can, be' Lydia Davis

The Lost Origins of the Essay

An expansive and exhilarating world tour of innovative nonfiction writing I think the reason we've never pinpointed the real beginning to this genre is because we've never agreed on what the genre even is. Do we read nonfiction in order to receive information, or do we read it to experience art? It's not very clear sometimes. This, then, is a book that tries to offer a clear objective: I am here in search of art. I am here to track the origins of an alternative to commerce. John D'Agata leaves no tablet unturned in his exploration of the roots of the essay. The Lost Origins of the Essay takes the reader from ancient Mesopotamia to classical Greece and Rome, from fifth-century Japan to nineteenth-century France, to modern Brazil, Germany, Barbados, and beyond. With brief and brilliant introductions to seminal works by Heraclitus, Sei Sho-nagon, Michel de Montaigne, Jonathan Swift, Virginia Woolf, Marguerite Duras, Octavio Paz, and more than forty other luminaries, D'Agata reexamines the international forebears of today's American nonfiction. This idiosyncratic collection makes a perfect historical companion to D'Agata's The Next American Essay, a touchstone among students and practitioners of the lyric essay.

Neck Deep and Other Predicaments - Essays
In an eclectic compilation of essays, the author of Other Electricities utilizes unexpectedly nonliterary forms to explore such diverse topics as the history of mining in northern Michigan, disc golf, topology, car washes, snow, and more. Original.

Finding Beauty in a Broken World

The naturalist author of Refuge and An Unspoken Hunger reflects on what it means to be human, the interconnection between the natural and human worlds, and how they combine to produce both tumult and peace, ugliness and beauty.

The Weight of Shadows - A Memoir of Immigration & Displacement

Tracing his story of becoming a US citizen, José Orduña’s memoir explores the complex issues of immigration and assimilation. José Orduña chronicles the process of becoming a North American citizen in a post-9/11 United States. Intractable realities—rooted in the continuity of US imperialism to globalism—form the landscape of Orduña’s daily experience, where the geopolitical meets the quotidian. In one anecdote, he recalls how the only apartment his parents could rent was one that didn’t require signing a lease or running a credit check, where the floors were so crooked he once dropped an orange and watched it roll in six directions before settling in a corner. Orduña describes the absurd feeling of being handed a piece of paper—his naturalization certificate—that guarantees something he has always known: he has every right to be here. A trenchant exploration of race, class, and identity, The Weight of Shadows is a searing meditation on the nature of political, linguistic, and cultural borders, and the meaning of “America.” From the Trade Paperback edition.

Some of Us Are Very Hungry Now

"Beautiful, brilliant, bold... Tantamount to a slice from the Americana songbook." —Christopher John Stephens, PopMatters With luminous insight and fervent prose, Andre Perry’s debut collection of personal essays, Some of Us Are Very Hungry Now, travels from Washington, DC, to Iowa City to Hong Kong in search of both individual and national identity. While displaying tenderness and a disarming honesty, Perry catalogs racial degradations committed on the campuses of elite universities and liberal bastions like San Francisco while coming of age in America. The essays in Some of Us Are Very Hungry Now take the form of personal reflection, multiple choice questions, screenplays, and imagined talk-show conversations, while traversing the daily minefields of childhood schoolyards and Midwestern dive-bars. The impression of Perry’s personal journey is arresting and beguiling, while announcing the author’s arrival as a formidable American voice. "A complete, deep, satisfying read... The variety of structures, formats, and rhythms Perry uses in Some of Us Are Very Hungry Now is extraordinary... These essays shine with broken humanity and announce the arrival of a new voice in contemporary nonfiction, but they do so with heaps of melancholia and frustration instead of answers. That Perry can hurt us and keep us asking for more is a testament to his talent as a storyteller." —Gabino Iglesias, NPR