



## Writing Los Angeles: a Literary Anthology (Library of America)

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Los Angeles has always been a place of paradisaal promise and apocalyptic undercurrents. Simone de Beauvoir saw a kaleidoscopic "hall of mirrors," Aldous Huxley a "city of dreadful joy." Jack Kerouac found a "huge desert encampment," David Thomson imagined "Marilyn Monroe, fifty miles long, lying on her side, half-buried on a ridge of crumbling rock."

In *Writing Los Angeles*, The Library of America presents a glittering panorama in fiction, poetry, essays, journalism, and diaries by more than seventy writers. It brings to life the entrancing surfaces and unsettling contradictions of The City of Angels, from Raymond Chandler's evocation of murderous moods fed by the Santa Ana winds to John Gregory Dunne's affectionate tribute to "the deceptive perspectives of the pale subtropical light." Here are fascinating strata of Los Angeles history, from the 1920s oil boom to 1980s graffiti art, from flamboyant evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson to surf music genius Brian Wilson, from German emigré intellectuals to hard-bitten homicide cops. Here are fragile ecosystems, architectural splendors, and social chasms, in the words of writers as various as M.F.K. Fisher, William Faulkner, Bertolt Brecht, Evelyn Waugh, Octavio Paz, Joan Didion, Norman Mailer, Walter Mosley, Mona Simpson, and Charles Mingus. Art Pepper discovers the Central Avenue of the 1940s jazz scene; screenwriter Robert Towne reflects on Chinatown's origin; David Hockney teaches himself to drive; Pico Iyer finds at LAX "as clear an image as exists today of the world we are about to enter."

*Writing Los Angeles* is an incomparable literary tour guide to a city of shifting identities and endless surprises.

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