



The Kentucky Anthology: Two Hundred Years of Writing in the Bluegrass State

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Long before the official establishment of the Commonwealth, intrepid pioneers ventured west of the Allegheny Mountains into an expansive, alluring wilderness that they began to call Kentucky. After blazing trails, clearing plots, and surviving innumerable challenges, a few adventurers found time to pen celebratory tributes to their new homeland. In the two centuries that followed, many of the world's finest writers, both native Kentuckians and visitors, have paid homage to the Bluegrass State with the written word.

In *The Kentucky Anthology*, acclaimed author and literary historian Wade Hall has assembled an unprecedented and comprehensive compilation of writings pertaining to Kentucky and its land, people, and culture. Hall's introductions to each author frame both popular and lesser-known selections in a historical context. He examines the major cultural and political developments in the history of the Commonwealth, finding both parallels and marked distinctions between Kentucky and the rest of the United States.

While honoring the heritage of Kentucky in all its glory, Hall does not blithely turn away from the state's most troubling episodes and institutions such as racism, slavery, and war. Hall also builds the argument, bolstered by the strength and significance of the collected writings, that Kentucky's best writers compare favorably with the finest in the world. Many of the authors presented here remain universally renowned and beloved, while others have faded into the tides of time, waiting for rediscovery. Together, they guide the reader on a literary tour of Kentucky, from the mines to the rivers and from the deepest hollows to the highest peaks.

The Kentucky Anthology traces the interests and aspirations, the achievements and failures and the comedies and tragedies that have filled the lives of generations of Kentuckians. These diaries, letters, speeches, essays, poems, and stories bring history brilliantly to life. Jesse Stuart once wrote, "If these United States can be called a body, Kentucky can be called its heart." *The Kentucky Anthology* captures the rhythm and spirit of that heart in the words of its most remarkable chroniclers.

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