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The Story About the Story Vol. II

By David Foster Wallace



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The essays in *The Story About the Story Vol. II* chart a trajectory that digs deep into the past and aims toward a future in which literature can play a new and more profound role in how we think, read, live, and write.

In the second volume of *The Story About the Story*, editor J. C. Hallman continues to argue for an alternative to the staid five-paragraph-essay writing that has inoculated so many against the effects of good books. Writers have long approached writing about reading from an intensely personal perspective, incorporating their pasts and their passions into their process of interpretation. Never before collected in a single volume, the many essays Hallman has compiled build on the idea of a "creative criticism," and offers new possibilities for how to write about reading. *The Story About the Story Vol. II* documents not only an identifiable trend in writing about books that can and should be emulated, it also offers lessons from a remarkable range of celebrated authors that amount to an invaluable course on both how to write and how to read well. Whether they discuss a staple of the canon (Thomas Mann on Leo Tolstoy), the merits of a contemporary (Vivian Gornick on Grace Paley), a pillar of genre-writing (Jane Tompkins on Louis L'Amour), or, arguably, the funniest man on the planet (David Shields on Bill Murray), these essays are by turns poignant, smart, suggestive, intellectual, humorous, sassy, scathing, laudatory, wistful, and hopeful?and above all deeply engaged in a process of careful reading. The essays in *The Story About the Story Vol. II* chart a trajectory that digs deep into the past and aims toward a future in which literature can play a new and more profound role in how we think, read, live, and write.



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Editorial Review

Review

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About the Author

J. C. Hallman is a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop and the Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins University. In addition to editing *The Story About the Story*, he is also the author of several books, including *The Chess Artist*, *In Utopia*, *Wm & H'ry*, and *B & Me: A True Story of Literary Arousal*.

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