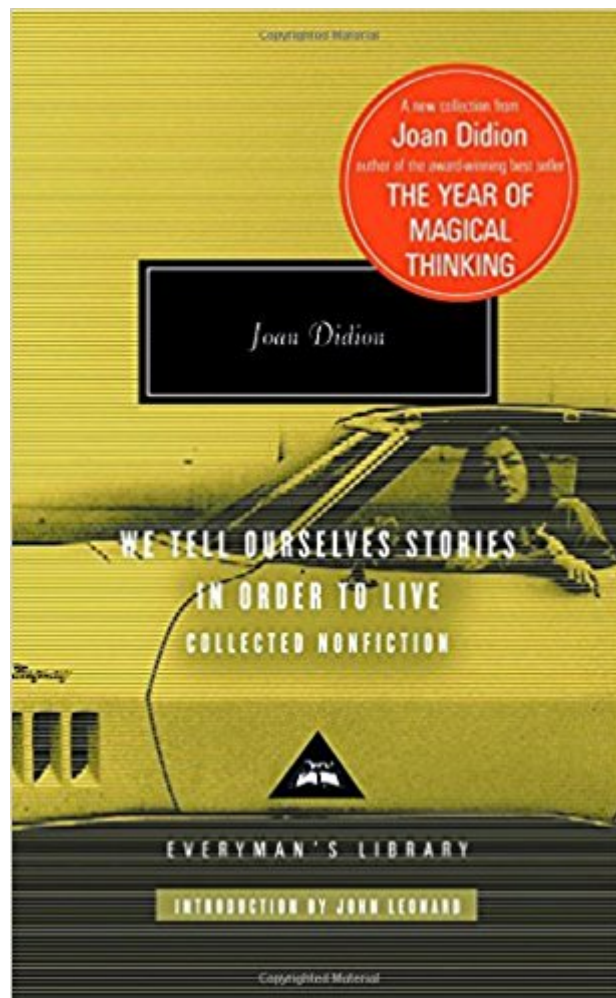




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# We Tell Ourselves Stories In Order To Live: Collected Nonfiction (Everyman's Library)



## Synopsis

(Book Jacket Status: Jacketed) Joan Didion's incomparable and distinctive essays and journalism are admired for their acute, incisive observations and their spare, elegant style. Now the seven books of nonfiction that appeared between 1968 and 2003 have been brought together into one thrilling collection. *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* captures the counterculture of the sixties, its mood and lifestyle, as symbolized by California, Joan Baez, Haight-Ashbury. *The White Album* covers the revolutionary politics and the "contemporary wasteland" of the late sixties and early seventies, in pieces on the Manson family, the Black Panthers, and Hollywood. *Salvador* is a riveting look at the social and political landscape of civil war. *Miami* exposes the secret role this largely Latin city played in the Cold War, from the Bay of Pigs through Watergate. In *After Henry* Didion reports on the Reagans, Patty Hearst, and the Central Park jogger case. The eight essays in *Political Fictions* on censorship in the media, Gingrich, Clinton, Starr, and "compassionate conservatism," among others show us how we got to the political scene of today. And in *Where I Was From* Didion shows that California was never the land of the golden dream.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"[Didion's] one of the most recognizable and brilliant literary styles to emerge in America during the past four decades . . . [She is] a great American writer." *New York Times Book Review* "One beautiful sentence follows

another . . . Didion has remained a clearheaded and original writer all her long life. *Newsweek* "Her intelligence is as honed as ever . . . Her vision is ice-water clear . . . Didion has captured the mood of America." *New York Times* "Many of us have tried, and failed, to master [Didion's] gift for the single ordinary deflating word, the word that spins an otherwise flat sentence through five degrees of irony. But her sentences could only be hers." *Chicago Tribune* "I have been trying forever to figure out why [Didion's] sentences are better than mine or yours . . . Something about [their] cadence. They come at you, if not from ambush, then in gnomic haikus, ice pick laser beams, or waves. Even the space on the page around these sentences is more interesting than it ought to be, as if to square a sandbox for a Sphinx." *from the Introduction by John Leonard*

Joan Didion was born in California and lives in New York City. She is the author of five novels and seven previous books of nonfiction.

Here's a simply wonderful anthology of Joan Didion's writing -- in essence, an omnibus of all the nonfiction this talented and versatile writer had published throughout her career, up to about 2003. Yes, the print is on the small side. On the other hand, this 1,000-plus page volume is hardbound, with a marker ribbon bound in, in best Everyman's Library style. It is also quite reasonably priced, especially given the discount. I have given this book to several people who assumed they were familiar with all Didion's writing but found to their delight there were passages (and occasionally entire books) they had missed. How can you go wrong?

I am a fan of Joan Didion, the late John Leonard, and Everyman's Library. Here you get all three. What's not to like? Joan Didion's "Goodbye to All That" is a classic personal essay--one of my favorite pieces of writing of any kind. And here, you get that, and all the other essays from her seminal "Slouching Towards Bethlehem"--and every other collection of non-fiction up to the time this collection was released. Read together, you get a sense of America in the latter part of the 20th century, with particular emphasis on California as aspiration, dream, illusion, etc etc. The introduction by John Leonard is well-done and shows a real understanding of the whole body of Didion's work. And then Everyman does its usual fine job of packaging great writing in an attractive package at a reasonable price. Mind you, this is one heavy tome, with seven full books rolled into one (1100 pages). But you want them all. So here they are. Enjoy!

Joan Didion provides a roadmap for how to write in these collected essays. There's been a Didion backlash of late amongst the hipster inheritors of the Berkeley hippies. Didion famously and roundly critiques, a sad irony of the need to desecrate because they, God forbid, have attained a degree of cultural saturation based upon merit alone. Didion's later political work, counter to the arguments of these more recent critics, is just as smart, searing, and intelligent as her early memoir work. This is a book to visit and revisit. Maybe one to even buy multiple copies of, saving one for pristine condition without notes and scrawling across the pages of the other.

First time in over 5 years that I read a book from the library and just had to have a copy in my personal collection! Ever wonder what the heck was going on while you were still too young to understand? I was born in the 50s and Joan Didion explained in her "no holds barred" journalism so many things that changed my viewpoint. I will read anything she puts pen to paper about, I love her style!

Collected in this 1,100-page volume are seven of Joan Didion's nonfiction books from 1968 to 2005: *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*, *The White Album*, *Salvador*, *Miami*, *After Henry*, *Political Fictions*, and *Where I Was From*. Coming through in every page she writes are four elements that elevate her as a literary giant: her stark honesty as a masterful documentarian of our times; her unique eye for focusing on seemingly minute but monumentally revealing details that most other writers would overlook; her patented, often humorous, but mostly surprising way of inserting herself in her narratives, alternately as the insightful commentator, disinterested witness, or willful participant; and her downright artistry in styling a sentence as few other writers bother to attempt. This book is a great time investment for anyone who wants to read the works of a modern American master.

Wonderful book. It's a great addition to my library. A definite gem from a Sacramento native. What a time capsule!

Book is well-bound, paper is high quality. Includes detailed chronology of Didion's career, side by side with coinciding literary events. Book includes a thread bookmark sewn into the spine. Comes in handy in a book over 1,000 pages long. Didion references other texts frequently, so the detailed index of those works is included at the back of her own. I wish more books had this feature.

Didion is one of the most perceptive writers of non-fiction. She writes with clarity and brilliance about

America, our politics, and our dreams of ourselves.

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