



Wild Ducks Flying Backward

Tom Robbins

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Known for his meaty seriocomic novels—expansive works that are simultaneously lowbrow and highbrow—Tom Robbins has also published over the years a number of short pieces, predominantly nonfiction. His travel articles, essays, and tributes to actors, musicians, sex kittens, and thinkers have appeared in publications ranging from *Esquire* to *Harper's*, from *Playboy* to the *New York Times*, *High Times*, and *Life*. A generous sampling, collected here for the first time and including works as diverse as scholarly art criticism and some decidedly untypical country-music lyrics, **Wild Ducks Flying Backward** offers a rare sweeping overview of the eclectic sensibility of an American original.

Whether he is rocking with the Doors, depoliticizing Picasso's *Guernica*, lamenting the angst-ridden state of contemporary literature, or drooling over tomato sandwiches and a species of womanhood he calls "the genius waitress," Robbins's briefer writings often exhibit the same five traits that perhaps best characterize his novels: an imaginative wit, a cheerfully brash disregard for convention, a sweetly nasty eroticism, a mystical but keenly observant eye, and an irrepressible love of language.

Embedded in this primarily journalistic compilation are a couple of short stories, a sheaf of largely unpublished poems, and an off-beat assessment of our divided nation. And wherever we open **Wild Ducks Flying Backward**, we're apt to encounter examples of the intently serious playfulness that percolates from the mind of a self-described "romantic Zen hedonist" and "stray dog in the banquet halls of culture."

From the Hardcover edition.

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