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Erogenous Zones: An Anthology Of Sex Abroad (Modern Library)



Synopsis

Travel, like sex, is the search for the unknown. What, after all, could be more unknown than a sexual experience in a strange land, or with a stranger? This question, or preoccupation, informs much of the most insightful and eloquent travel writing we have. Major writers--from Byron to Casanova, from Gustave Flaubert to Graham Greene, Henry Miller to André Gide, and from Christopher Isherwood to Isabelle Eberhardt--experimented sexually when traveling, often finding themselves willing and able to surrender to the moment in a way they could not at home. In the pursuit of pleasure or adventure, or simply another kind of experience, these writers expanded their knowledge of the countries and societies in which they found themselves. Sometimes they fell in love, sometimes not, but their erotic encounters irrevocably colored their perceptions of abroad forever. This rich material, arranged by region, makes for exhilarating reading. The travel writer, novelist, and critic Lucretia Stewart has gathered the best writing in the field, from travel literature, diaries, memoirs, autobiographies, and letters. The landscape is remarkably diverse: from Hemingway's Paris in the 1920s to Paul Theroux's extraordinarily visceral depiction of an African leper village to Paul Gauguin's quiet sojourn in an undeveloped Tahiti to Geoff Dyer's wistful contemplation of a hippie beach in Mexico. All the while, we are caught up in the moment, mesmerized by the articulate, penetrating, and arresting glimpses of the world that these writers have shown us. This is a witty, incisive, erotic, and totally original collection. Lucretia Stewart has written an Introduction for this volume.

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Customer Reviews

Erogenous Zones brings together an assortment of nonfictional tales of sex and travel. Editor Stewart, who has written two other travel books as well as a novel, arranges the collection geographically by continent, with the bulk of the tales taking place in Europe. Extracts are fairly brief, usually only a few pages in length, and consist of straight and gay encounters written by men and women and taking place in a variety of exotic locations. Among the authors included are Ernest Hemingway, Paul Theroux, and Lord Byron, and the excerpts, taken mostly from their novels or memoirs, describe such varied encounters as spending a week with a lover in Venice and kissing in Japan. Although the book emphasizes the natural connection between travel and sex--that one is freer to experiment and have casual encounters while traveling--it fails to establish a useful and appealing bond between exotic locales and eroticism. Most extracts are neither interesting nor particularly erotic. Not recommended.-Alison Hopkins, Queens Borough P.L., Jamaica, NY
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"Of course, an entire book of passing sexual encounters is hard to resist, but Erogenous Zones is also a tribute to the underappreciated craft of nonfiction writing. The book ends up being like a box of chocolates that you struggle not to entirely eat in one sitting."--Mark Kurlansky, author of Cod and The Basque History of the World

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