



Wide Awake in the Pelican State: Stories by Contemporary Louisiana Writers

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Wide Awake in the Pelican State—which mimics the title of Dinty W. Moore's contribution to the collection—brings together twenty-one of the finest modern writers who claim Louisiana as home, having lived all or some part of their lives in the Pelican State. Each author shares the knack of telling a good story, a Louisiana tradition that dates back two hundred years to the tales told by African American griots and the stories swapped among Mississippi river workers on boats, in taverns, and around campfires.

Though united by talent and place, these writers speak with inflections that vary by gender, race, education, religion, and time spent elsewhere. Their stories are also richly diverse, ranging from Ernest Gaines's humorous portrait of black culture in rural Louisiana to Tim Parrish's aching depiction of white working-class family life in Baton Rouge, from Ellen Gilchrist's acerbically funny rendering of wealthy New Orleans bankers to Richard Ford's flinty unfolding of a father-son relationship in the marshy netherworld south of the Crescent City. The pieces span the full swath of Louisiana experience, be it the life of a Vietnamese refugee in Lake Charles or the miraculous appearance of the image of Jesus on a refrigerator in Holly Springs.

In addition to their Louisiana-rooted inspiration and highest regard for craft, the stories in Wide Awake in the Pelican State share a deep humanity. These are stories about people—noble and nefarious, some living high and others down on their luck—as they fathom the tragic depths and comic heights of love, betrayal, family, change, and life writ large.

Contributors to Wide Awake in the Pelican State: John Biguenet, James Lee Burke, Robert Olen Butler, Kelly Cherry, Moira Crone, Albert Belisle Davis, Charles deGravelles, John Dufresne, Richard Ford, Ernest J. Gaines, Louis Gallo, Tim Gautreaux, Norman German, Ellen Gilchrist, Joan Arbour Grant, Shirley Ann Grau, Dinty W. Moore, Tim Parrish, Tom Piazza, Nancy Richard, James Wilcox.

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Margarito Rone:

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Melvin Lucero:

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