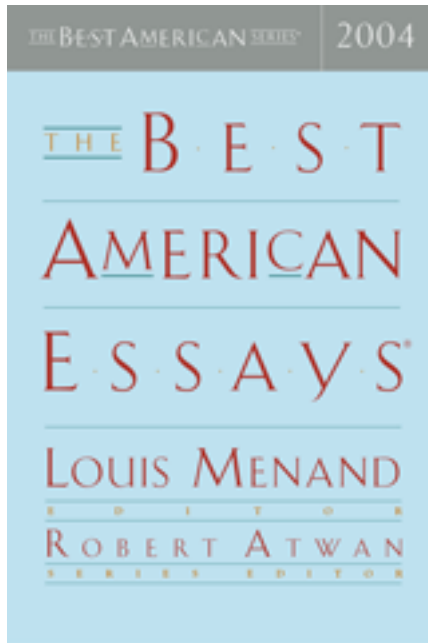


## Press Release



# The Best American Essays 2004

edited by [Louis Menand](#)

series edited by [Robert Atwan](#)

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"Writing is a window. It opens onto vanished feelings and vanished worlds. Often it is the only window there is, the only access we will ever have to those things. It is more than a mere record, like a photograph, because it is also a sensibility, a point of view, a voice. It is the place where, fifty or a hundred years from now, people will go to see — or to hear — what it was like to be alive when we were alive. We were alive in 2003, and these pieces are part of what remains." — Louis Menand, from his Introduction

## About the Book

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Selected by the Pulitzer Prize–winning writer Louis Menand, *The Best American Essays 2004* showcases the finest nonfiction writing published in the past year.

Included in this nineteenth edition of the best-selling anthology:

- **Kathryn Chetkovich** on being and loving a writer
- **Jonathan Franzen** on the existentials of high school hijinks
- **Adam Gopnik** on *The Matrix*
- **Laura Hillenbrand** on chronic fatigue syndrome
- **Rick Moody** on the meaning of "cool"
- **Susan Orlean** on the World Taxidermy Championships
- **Alex Ross** on pop music
- **Janna Malamud Smith** on the death of her father, Bernard Malamud

Additional literary lights whose work appears in this year's collection: Anne Fadiman, Jared Diamond, Leonard Michaels, Oliver Sacks, and Cynthia Zarin, among others. Also included are newly discovered essays by James Agee and Tennessee Williams, neither of which appeared in print until 2003. The topics are diverse and the writing all displays "an

awareness of craft and forcefulness of thought," according to series editor Robert Atwan.

## About the Editors

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**Louis Menand** is the author of *The Metaphysical Club* and *American Studies* and is a staff writer for *The New Yorker*.

**Robert Atwan** has been the series editor of *The Best American Essays* since its inception in 1986.