





says, "I've just never had a desire to write about any place else." In between those figurative bookends are hundreds of other writers--some internationally recognized, others just becoming known--who draw inspiration and often subject matter from the unique places and people that are Texas. To give everyone who is interested in Texas writing a representative sampling of the breadth and vitality of the state's current literary production, this volume features conversations with fifty of Texas's most notable established writers and emerging talents. The writers included here work in a wide variety of genres--novels, short stories, poetry, plays, screenplays, essays, nonfiction, and magazine journalism. In their conversations with interviewers from the Writers' League of Texas and other authors' organizations, the writers speak of their apprenticeships, literary influences, working habits, connections with their readers, and the domestic and public events that have shaped their writing. Accompanying the interviews are excerpts from the writers' work, as well as their photographs, biographies, and bibliographies. Joe Holley's introductory essay--an overview of Texas writing from Cabeza de Vaca's 1542 Relacin to the work of today's generation of writers, who are equally at home in Hollywood as in Texas--provides the necessary context to appreciate such a diverse collection of literary voices. A sampling from the book: "This land has been my subject matter. One thing that distinguishes me from the true naturalist is that I've never been able to look at land without thinking of the people who've been on it. It's fundamental to me." --John Graves "Writing is a way to keep ourselves more in touch with everything we experience. It seems the best gifts and thoughts are given to us when we pause, take a deep breath, look around, see what's there, and return to where we were, revived." --Naomi Shihab Nye "I've said this many times in print: the novel is the middle-age genre. Very few people have written really good novels when they are young, and few people have written really good novels when they are old. You just tail off, and lose a certain level of concentration. Your imaginative energy begins to lag. I feel like I'm repeating myself, and most writers do repeat themselves." --Larry McMurtry "I was a pretty poor cowhand. I grew up on the Macaraw Ranch, east of Crane, Texas. My father tried very hard to make a cowboy out of me, but in my case it never seemed to work too well. I had more of a literary bent. I loved to read, and very early on I began to write small stories, short stories, out of the things I liked to read." --Elmer Kelton

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