

August, 2022

Creative Nonfiction  
Comprehensive Exam Reading List

**ESSAYS & EXCERPTS:**

Julia Alvarez, "Picky Eater"

Roger Angell, "This Old Man": <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/02/17/old-man-3>

James, Baldwin, "Notes of a Native Son"

Jo Ann Beard, "The Fourth State of Matter"

Wendy Call, "Beautiful Flesh": <https://thegeorgiareview.com/posts/beautiful-flesh/>

Lisa Chavez, "Independence Day, Manley Hot Springs, Alaska."

Alexander Chee, "Girl": <https://www.guernicamag.com/girl/>

Joan Didion, "The White Album"

Annie Dillard, "Living Like Weasels"

Brian Doyle, "Leap": <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/faith/questions/leap.html>

--- "Joyas Voladoras": <https://theamericanscholar.org/joyas-volardores/>

Loren Eiseley, "The Brown Wasps":  
[https://members.tripod.com/nature\\_writer/Naturalist/eiseley.htm](https://members.tripod.com/nature_writer/Naturalist/eiseley.htm)

Louise Erdrich, "Big Grass"

F. Scott Fitzgerald, "The Crack-Up"

Benjamin Franklin, from *The Autobiography...* (selection from *Norton Anthology of American Autobiography*)

Roxanne Gay, "What Fullness Is: On Getting Weight Reduction Surgery":  
<https://gay.medium.com/the-body-that-understands-what-fullness-is-f2e40c40cd75>

Elise Collette Goldbach, "White Horse": <https://aqreview.org/white-horse/>

Silas Hansen, "What Real Men Do": <https://www.thenormalschool.com/blog/2016/12/01/silas-hansen>

Ed Hoagland, "The Courage of Turtles"

bell hooks, "Earthbound" (from *Colors of Nature*)

Sonya Huber, "Pain Woman Takes Your Keys"

Zora Neale Hurston, "How It Feels to Be Colored Me"

Pico Iyer, "Why We Travel": <https://picoiyerjourneys.com/2000/03/18/why-we-travel/>

Leslie Jamison, "The Empathy Exams": <https://believermag.com/the-empathy-exams/>

Ruchir Joshi, "Clarity" (from *Best American Essays 2021*)

Tom Junod, "'Can You Say...Hero?'"

Jamaica Kincaid, "In History" (from *Colors of Nature*)

Barry Lopez, "Love in a Time of Terror" (from *Best American Essays 2021*)

Nancy Mairs, "On Being a Cripple"

John McPhee, "The Search for Marvin Gardens"

Michel de Montaigne, "Of the Inconstancy of Our Actions":  
<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3600/3600-h/3600-h.htm#link2HCH0058>

---- "Of Idleness": <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3600/3600-h/3600-h.htm#link2HCH0008>

Sy Montgomery, "Deep Intellect"

Michele Morano, "In the Subjunctive Mood"

N. Scott Momaday, "The Way to Rainy Mountain"

Aimee Nezhukumatathil, "Peacock" and "Vampire Squid" (from *World of Wonders*)

George Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant": <https://www.orwellfoundation.com/the-orwell-foundation/orwell/essays-and-other-works/shooting-an-elephant/>

Zitkala-Ša, "The Great Spirit": <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/zitkala-sa/stories/spirit.html>

Scott Russell Sanders, "The Inheritance of Tools"

David Sedaris, "I Like Guys"

Richard Selzer, "The Knife"

Leslie Silko, "Landscape, History, and the Pueblo Imagination"

Dariel Suarez, "In Orbit" (from *Best American Essays 2021*)

Amy Tan, "Mother Tongue"

Henry David Thoreau, "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For"

June Thunderstorm, "Revenge of the Mouth Breathers: A Smoker's Manifesto" (original title, "Off Our Butts"): <https://thebaffler.com/salvos/off-our-butts-thunderstorm>

Twain, from *Life on the Mississippi* (selection from *Norton Anthology of American Autobiography*)

Alice Walker, "Looking for Zora"

E.B. White, "Once More to the Lake"

Terry Tempest Williams, "The Clan of the One-Breasted Women"

David Foster Wallace, "Consider the Lobster"

Virginia Woolf, "The Death of the Moth"

### **CRAFT ESSAYS:**

Chris Anderson, "Error, Ambiguity, and the Peripheral"

Emily W. Blacker, "Ending the Endless: The Art of Ending Personal Essays": <https://www.assayjournal.com/emily-w-blacker-ending-the-endless-the-art-of-ending-personal-essays-51.html>

Barrie Jean Borich "The Craft of Writing Queer": <https://brevitymag.com/craft-essays/the-craft-of-writing-queer/>

Annie Dillard, "To Fashion a Text"

Peter Elbow, "The Pleasures of Voice in the Literary Essay"

Melissa Febos, "A Big Shitty Party: Six Parables of Writing About Other People" (from *Body Work: The Radical Power of Personal Narrative*)

Patricia Hampl, "Memory and Imagination"

Silas Hansen, "On Asking the Hard Questions": <https://brevitymag.com/craft-essays/on-asking-the-hard-questions/>

Sonya Huber, "Voices of Joy" (from *Voice First: A Writer's Manifesto*)

Mary Karr, "Blind Spots and False Selves" (from *The Art of Memoir*)

Carl Klaus, "Toward a Collective Poetics of the Essay" (from *Essayists on the Essay*)

Lisa Low, "Proleptic Strategies in Race-Based Essays: Jordan K. Thomas, Rita Banerjee, and Durga Chew-Bose": <https://www.assayjournal.com/lisa-low-proleptic-strategies-in-race-based-essays-jordan-k-thomas-rita-banerjee-and-durga-chew-bose-assay-71.html>

George Orwell, “Politics and the English Language”

Jen Soriano, “Multiplicity from the Margins: The Expansive Truth of Intersectional Form”:  
<https://www.assayjournal.com/jen-soriano-multiplicity-from-the-margins-the-expansive-truth-of-intersectional-form-51.html>

Diana Wilson, “Laces in the Corset: Structures of Poetry and Prose that Bind the Lyric Essay”:  
<https://www.assayjournal.com/diana-wilson-laces-in-the-corset-structures-of-poetry-and-prose-that-bind-the-lyric-essay-12.html>

Virginia Woolf, “The Modern Essay”

### **BOOKS:**

Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*

Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

M.F.K Fisher, *The Gastronomical Me*

Ross Gay, *The Book of Delights: Essays*

Maxine Hong Kingston, *Woman Warrior*

Chaney Kwak, *The Passenger*

Carmen Maria Machado, *In the Dream House*

Joseph Mitchell, *Joe Gould's Secret*

Claudia Rankin, *Citizen: An American Lyric*

Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis* (the complete edition)

Elie Wiesel, *Night*