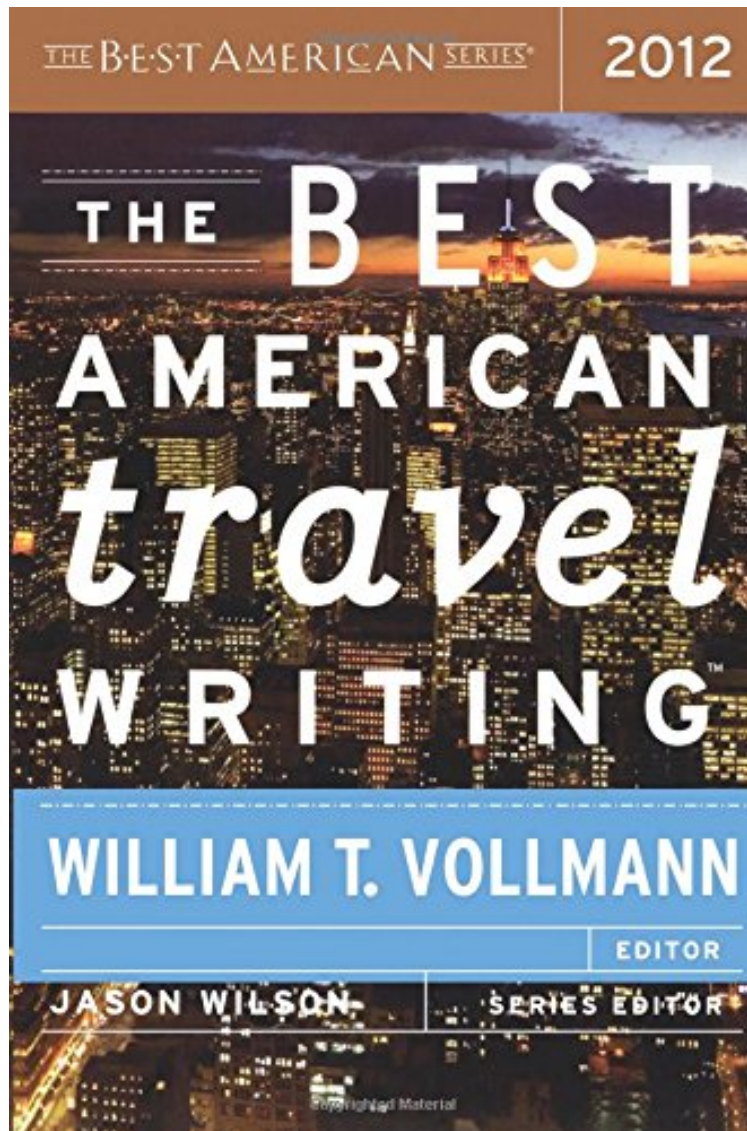


## The Best American Travel Writing 2012

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**From Mariner Books :** The Best American Travel Writing 2012 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Best American Travel Writing 2012:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very depressing  
By Avid Reader  
Halfway through this year's edition of "Best American Sports Writing," I was ready to stop watching any major sport ever again. A litany of stories about brain-damaged football players and hockey players, as well as pschotic basketball players, left me wondering why anyone would want to compile these stories into a book that is supposed to celebrate sports. Generally absent from this

edition are the funny stories about sports characters or the interesting and poignant ones about obscure sports and forgotten champions or losers. It's as if the book was edited by someone who doesn't care about the games and who hates the centrality that sports has in our society. Then I remembered that Michael Wilbon is the guest editor. Wilbon's schtick in the last 15 years has been to rip sports as a business and a social phenomenon. He hates all owners, the entire NCAA infrastructure, and most players. He hates the media hype surrounding the sport, even as he has parlayed it into an ultra-lucrative career in which he doesn't have to actually do any hard journalistic work any more. Basically, he name-drops his pals from the 1980s and 1990s and moans about how today's athletes are coddled, or cheaters, or stupid, or whatever. This book reflects his bias in many ways. By the end of the book, I'd calmed down a bit. I enjoyed the pieces about kooky Rangers manager Ron Washington and rakish sportswriter George Kimball. I'd seen the pieces about Bryce Harper and Novak Djokovic when they were first published, but I enjoyed re-reading them with the reflection time to have enjoyed watching those players ascend the heights that were only beginning when the articles were written. I marveled at the reporting of Taylor Branch's lengthy piece about the hypocrisy of college sports (even though it hews to the negative theme of most of the book). In short, this collection has a lot to commend it, even if it lacks stories with whimsy, is too focused on the major sports, and is too rooted in its time (rather than having stories with timeless value). I'd give it a 3.5 if that was possible.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Non-traditional travel narratives, some real gems here

By Carrie Kellenberger

A collection of travel essays written by a group of male travel authors. I guess women had nothing important to offer this year. I found a lot of these essays hit and miss, as the essays weren't traditional travel narratives by any means. Nevertheless, there were some key pieces that stand out in my mind. My favorites were:

Henry Shukman's Chernobyl, My Primeval, Teeming, Irradiated Eden - A rich tale of a modern-day Chernobyl and its decline into an ancient garden of oddities.

Elliot D. Woods Garbage City - The story of a group of people called the Zabbaleens, who have worked as Cairo's informal garbage collectors for the past 70 to 80 years. They support themselves by going from door to door to collect trash for no charge. They recycle up to 80 percent of what they collect by using their pigs to eat all the organic trash. Everything else is reused and recycled.

Robin Kirk's City of Walls - A terrific read on Northern Ireland and the IRA. I read this essay out loud to my husband while we were road-tripping and we were both fascinated with the history behind the piece.

Pico Iyer's Maximum India - Exploring Varanasi, the City of the Dead, in India. Located on the banks of the Ganges in Uttar Pradesh, Varanasi is holiest of the seven sacred cities in Hinduism and Jainism. Hindus believe that death at Varanasi brings salvation.

Luke Dittrich's Walking the Border - A hike along the US-Mexican border. What a great idea for a story!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. More actual Travel next time, please!

By file

It's really hard to give a "how many stars" rating to an anthology. Clearly, they vary from writer to writer. There were, as always a few 5 star pieces. (I particularly liked the Pico Iyer, Henry Shukman, and Mark Jenkins. But I was disappointed by how many pieces this year were not really travel stories at all, but essays that feature a place in some way. Many of them were more politics than travel, and I happen to be burned out on the subject at the moment. This certainly does not make them bad stories, but they were not what I think of when I am promised a travel story, so I felt a little cheated. I do really like this series, and I read it every year. I just found myself skipping selections this year, which I generally don't do.

The Best American Series

First, Best, and Best-Selling

The Best American series is the premier annual showcase for the country's finest short fiction and nonfiction. Each volume's series editor selects notable works from hundreds of magazines, journals, and websites. A special guest editor, a leading writer in the field, then chooses the best twenty or so pieces to publish. This unique system has made the Best American series the most respected and most popular of its kind.

The Best American Travel Writing 2012 includes Bryan Curtis, Lynn Freed, J. Malcolm Garcia, Peter Gwin, Pico Iyer, Mark Jenkins, Dimitar Kenarov, Robin Kirk, Kimberly Meyer, Paul Theroux, and others