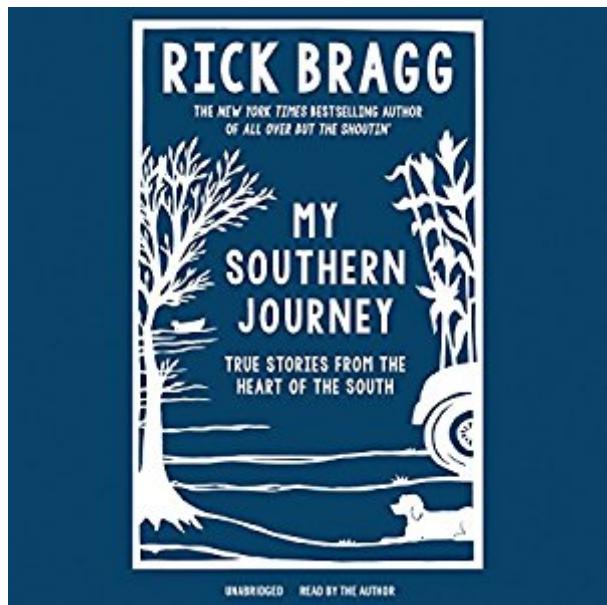


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My Southern Journey: True Stories From The Heart Of The South



Synopsis

From celebrated New York Times best-selling author and winner of the Pulitzer Prize Rick Bragg comes a poignant and wryly funny collection of essays on life in the South. Keenly observed and written with his insightful and deadpan sense of humor, Bragg explores enduring Southern truths about home, place, spirit, table, and the regions' varied geographies, including his native Alabama, Cajun country, and the Gulf Coast. Everything is explored, from regional obsessions with college football and fishing to mayonnaise and spoonbread to the simple beauty of a fish on the hook. Collected from over a decade of his writing, with many never-before-published essays written specifically for this edition, *My Southern Journey* is an entertaining and engaging listen, especially for Southerners (or Southerners at heart) and anyone who appreciates great writing.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 8 hours and 43 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Blackstone Audio, Inc.

Audible.com Release Date: September 15, 2015

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B014TB81VU

Best Sellers Rank: #29 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature > Literary Collections #52 in Books > Literature & Fiction > United States > Anthologies #159 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Essays & Correspondence > Essays

Customer Reviews

I had expected a collection of short stories, but these are really brief flashes -- most only a page or two. At first I found this really annoying -- the author would reel me in with a catchy headline and a story and then boom! it was over. Dagnabbit as we used to say in the South, I want to sink my teeth into these vignettes, not have them whiz by only for me to turn the page and start another one. However, once I let that go, I got used to the cadence and the pages flew by as I chuckled and remembered when I used to live in the South. Bragg is at his best when he's writing about what is clearly one of his favorite topics, southern food. I was reading this on a Southwest airplane eating a teeny tiny bag of honey peanuts while he described his mama making cornbread: "Later my mama

would take the cracklin's and mix them in a skillet of cornmeal and then bake it. As the meal cooked, the essence of the cracklin's would melt through the pone of the bread, and when it was done she would cut it into triangles and serve it with pinto beans and stewed squash and slice Spanish onions and pickled pepper so hot it would blind a baby if he rubbed it on his eyes." I sat in my teeney airplane seat and I didn't know what in the heck pone is but I wanted some of that cornbread "right quick." My mouth watered as I ate my darn peanuts and began to plan my next trip home. And that's where Bragg's artistry lies - just a few sentences and you're there. I won't even repeat his description of a place called "Harold's Barbecue" because if I do both you, dear reader, and me are going to have to go eat something and I've got to finish this review. Also, I loved that he mentioned one of my favorite smoked fish shacks in St. Pete Florida... Ted Peter's.

A friend of mine describes Rick Bragg as a "national treasure". Even if that assessment is a tad overstated it can be safely applied to his relationship with the American South. From his touching memoir of his mother, "All Over But the Shoutin'" to his recent biography of Jerry Lee Lewis, his works have beautifully expressed his undying love affair with the land of his birth. "My Southern Journey" continues this love affair with a series of short articles, many reprinted from magazines, that describes, in his unique style, what makes "The South" special. From its food to its music, from the back-country religions to its armadillos, Bragg describes them all and does in that passionately biased way that he has that imbues even the most mundane aspects of life with a quaint charm. As an unrepentant Yankee, I particularly enjoyed his descriptions of how the English language is spoken in the South differs from the rest of the country. Speaking of Thanksgiving, Bragg said "When I mentioned that we were having turkey and dressing at my house, my Yankee friends looked confused. You mean, they asked, the stuff you put on salads? It is a miracle we only fought one war." Perhaps my favorite line from the book is when he describes his attitude towards drinking in general and drinking bourbon in particular. "I am not a big drinker, but there has always been something comforting about brown liquor. After one, I always felt like I was covered in a warm quilt. The secret, across my life and my ancestor's lives, was not to drink seven more, turn the drink into a parachute, and jump off something tall." Speaking of moderation, I wouldn't describe the book as "sweet" but after reading it I can almost hear some woman's voice saying "Ain't that sweet!"

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