



Where Have You Been?: Selected Essays

Michael Hofmann

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An adventure with a roving genius of literary criticism

Michael Hofmann—poet, translator, and intellectual vagabond—has established himself as one of the keenest critics of contemporary literature. Safely nestled between the covers of *Where Have You Been?*, he offers a hand to guide us and an encouraging whisper in our ear, leading us on a trip through what to read, how to think, and why to like. And while these essays bear sharp insights that will help us revisit writers with a fresh eye, they are also a story of love between a reader and his treasured books.

In the thirty essays collected here, Hofmann brings his signature wit and sustained critical mastery to a poetic, penetrating, and candid discussion of the writers and artists of the last hundred years. Here are the indispensable poets without which contemporary poetry would be unimaginable—Elizabeth Bishop, "the poets' poets' poet," the "ghostly skill" of Robert Lowell, and the man he calls the greatest English poet since Shakespeare, Ted Hughes. But he also illumines the despair of John Berryman and the antics of poetry's bogeyman, Frederick Seidel.

In essays on art that are themselves works of art, Hofmann's agile and brilliant mind explores a panoply of subjects from the mastery of translation to the best day job for a poet. What these diverse gems share are the critic's insatiable curiosity and great charm. *Where Have You Been?* is an unmissable journey with literature's most irresistible flaneur.

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