



The Collected Stories of Lydia Davis

By Lydia Davis

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Lydia Davis is one of our most original and influential writers. She has been called "an American virtuoso of the short story form" (*Salon*) and "one of the quiet giants . . . of American fiction" (*Los Angeles Times Book Review*). Now, for the first time, Davis's short stories will be collected in one volume, from the groundbreaking *Break It Down* (1986) to the 2007 National Book Award nominee *Varieties of Disturbance*.

The Collected Stories of Lydia Davis is an event in American letters.

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Editorial Review

From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Critics unanimously praised this extraordinary (and extraordinarily hefty) collection, in which Davis masterly taps into myriad emotions—from melancholy to hilarity, empathy, and apathy. Each voice is unique; each story is equally difficult to categorize. Many of the stories lack basic names, dates, and places and are disconcerting in their brevity. Are they short stories? Flash fiction? Fables? Davis steadfastly refuses to adhere to any kind of prescribed formula, with stunning and original results. Whatever label readers decide to attach to her work, critics agreed that Davis is one of American literature's best-kept secrets.

Review

“Among the true originals of contemporary American short fiction.” —*San Francisco Chronicle*

“Davis is a magician of self-consciousness. Few writers now working make the words on the page matter more.” —JONATHAN FRANZEN

“All who know [Davis’s] work probably remember their first time reading it . . . Blows the roof off of so many of our assumptions about what constitutes short fiction.” —DAVE EGGERS, *McSweeney’s*

“Sharp, deft, ironic, understated, and consistently surprising.” —JOYCE CAROL OATES

“The best prose stylist in America.” —RICK MOODY

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"The best prose stylist in America." --RICK MOODY "This welcome collection of Lydia Davis's short fiction, which gathers stories from four previously published volumes, reveals that her obsessions have remained fairly consistent over the past 30 years: frustrated love, the entanglements of language, the writer engaged in the act of writing. But even when Davis traverses familiar territory, her masterful sentence style and peculiar perceptiveness make each work unmistakably distinct. Davis is known for her ability to pack big themes into a tight space; many stories here are less than a page, and some consist of only one sentence. The longer pieces frequently find her narrators making much out of the seemingly meager. In "The Bone," which first appeared in the collection *Break It Down*, a woman describes in detached detail the night a fishbone was caught in her now ex-husband's throat. In "The Mice" a narrator feels rejected by the mice that will not come into her kitchen, "as they come into the kitchens of [her] neighbors."--Kimberly King Parsons, "Time Out New York" "Lydia Davis is one of the best writers in America, a fact that has been kept under wraps by her specialization in short fiction rather than the novel and her discomfort with the idea of one event following another in some sensible pattern, an expectation she frequently plays with, as a kitten will with your fingers. Watch out for those teeth and claws. With the publication of this

Users Review

From reader reviews:

James Flynn:

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Harry Baxter:

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