

The Best American Essays 2016



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A true essay is "something hazarded, not definitive, not authoritative; something ventured on the basis of the author's personal experience and subjectivity," writes guest editor Jonathan Franzen in his introduction. However, his main criterion for selecting *The Best American Essays 2016* was, in a word, risk. Whether the risks involved championing an unpopular opinion, the possibility of ruining a professional career, or irrevocably offending family, for Franzen, "the writer has to be like the firefighter, whose job, while everyone else is fleeing the flames, is to run straight into them."

The Best American Essays 2016 includes ALEXANDER CHEE, PAUL CRENSHAW, JAQUIRA DÍAZ, LAURA KIPNIS, AMITAVA KUMAR, SEBASTIAN JUNGER, JOYCE CAROL OATES, OLIVER SACKS, THOMAS CHATTERTON WILLIAMS and others

JONATHAN FRANZEN, guest editor, is the author of five novels, most recently *Purity*, and five works of nonfiction and translation, including *Farther Away* and *The Kraus Project*. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the German Akademie der Künste, and the French Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

ROBERT ATWAN, the series editor of *The Best American Essays* since its inception in 1986, has published on a wide variety of subjects, from American advertising and early photography to ancient divination and Shakespeare. His criticism, essays, humor, poetry, and fiction have appeared in numerous periodicals nationwide.

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