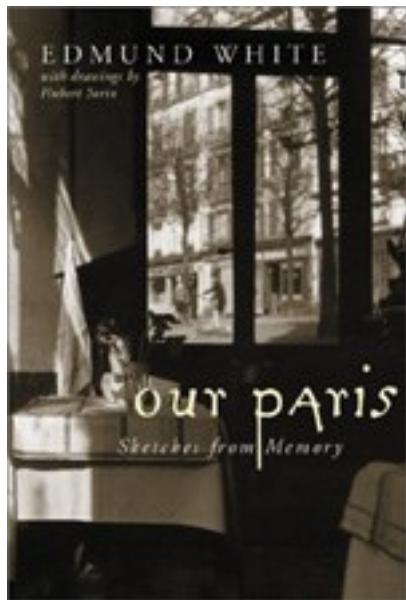


# Our Paris



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著者:Edmund White

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Edmund White, one of our most celebrated writers, and the French artist Hubert Sorin offer us a lighthearted, gently satiric portrait of their favorite people and places in and around their neighborhood, the run-down heart of Paris called the Châtelet. It is an enchantingly varied world, populated not only by dazzling literati and ultra-chic couturiers and art dealers but also by poetic shopkeepers, grandmotherly prostitutes, and, ever underfoot, an irrepressible basset hound named Fred. The foibles and eccentricities of these sometimes-outrageous, always-memorable individuals are brought to life with unfailing wit and affection.

Below the surface of this sparkling comedy there is a tragic undercurrent, for while Hubert Sorin was completing his work, he was nearing the end of his struggle with AIDS. The book is a tribute to the brave spirit that led the authors to banish the somber

and to celebrate the pleasures of their life together, as well as the differences between them. A scrumptious and touching memoir.

## 作者介绍:

Edmund White was born on January 13, 1940, in Cincinnati, Ohio. His father was, according to White, "a small entrepreneur who made a lot of money and then lost most of it during the time when small businessmen were being superceded by big corporations." When White was seven his parents divorced, and he went with his mother and sister to live on the outskirts of Chicago. Summers were spent with his father in Cincinnati.

In his 1991 essay titled "Out of the Closet, Onto the Bookshelf," White has written, "As a young teenager I looked desperately for things to read that might excuse me or assure me I wasn't the only one, that might confirm an identity I was unhappily piecing together. In the early 1950s, the only books I could find in the Evanston, Illinois, Public Library were Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice* (which suggested that homosexuality was fetid, platonic and death-dealing) and the biography of Nijinsky by his wife (in which she obliquely deplored the demonic influence of the impresario Diaghilev on her saintly husband, the great dancer—an influence that in this instance had produced not death but madness)."

White attended the exclusive Cranbrook Academy, and later majored in Chinese at the University of Michigan. Moving to New York City ("in pursuit of someone I later captured and lived with for five years"), he worked for Time-Life Books from 1962 until 1970. He writes, "I never considered myself a company man. I rushed home from work to my apartment on MacDougal Street, ate something and promptly went to bed. At eleven I would rise, dress as a hippie, and head out for the bars." After a year's sojourn in Rome, White returned to the U.S., where he served as an editor at *The Saturday Review* and *Horizon*.

Beginning in the mid-1970s, he and six other gay New York writers—Andrew Holleran, Robert Ferro, Felice Picano, George Whitmore, Christopher Cox, and Michael Grumley—formed a casual club known as the Violet Quill. Meeting in one another's apartments, they would read and critique one another's work, then move on to high tea. Together they represented a flowering of the kind of gay writing Edmund White as a teenager in Illinois had longed to discover. White's novels include his allegorical fantasia on Fire Island life, *Forgetting Elena* (1973), *Nocturnes for the King of Naples* (1978), and the first two volumes of a projected autobiographical tetralogy, *A Boy's Own Story* (1982) and *The Beautiful Room Is Empty* (1988). White completed the tetralogy with *The Farewell Symphony* (1997) and *The Married Man* (2000).

In 1983 he moved to France; when he returned in 1990 it was to a literary landscape devastated by AIDS. Four members of the Violet Quill—Ferro, Grumley, Cox and Whitmore—had died, as well as numerous other promising young writers such as Tim Dlugos and John Fox. White's two closest friends, the critic David Kalstone and his editor Bill Whitehead, were also dead from the disease. He has written, "For me, these losses were definitive. The witnesses to my life, the people who had shared the same references and sense of humor, were gone. The loss of all the books they might have written remains incalculable."

Although White is known as a novelist whose work has been widely praised by such writers as Vladimir Nabokov and Susan Sontag, it is as a cultural critic that White has

perhaps had his greatest influence. Urbane, knowing, sophisticated, he has chronicled gay life in the seventies through the nineties with wit and insight. He has become a grand arbiter of taste, though he has been criticized for the narrowness of that taste—especially after his 1992 anthology *Gay Short Fiction* contained no writing by men of color. Nevertheless, his 1980 travelogue *States of Desire: Travels in Gay America* remains a classic if insouciant (and now poignant) look at gay life at a particular cultural moment just before the onslaught of AIDS. His pioneering 1977 *The Joy of Gay Sex: An Intimate Guide for Gay Men to the Pleasures of a Gay Life*, written with Dr. Charles Silverstein, introduced millions, gay and straight and curious alike, to a brave new world of sexual practices and lifestyle.

The cumulative effect of White's presence simultaneously within so many different genres was to begin to define, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the parameters of "gay culture," whatever that evolving entity might be. AIDS, of course, has darkened all that, and White has written of the dilemma facing gay writers today: "Some . . . think that it's unconscionable to deal with anything [other than AIDS]; others believe that since gay culture is in imminent danger of being reduced to a single issue, one that once again equates homosexuality with a dire medical condition, the true duty of gay writers is to remind readers of the wealth of gay accomplishments. Only in that way, they argue, will a gay heritage be passed down to a post-plague generation." White's own choice has been clear: his most recent work is a monumental biography of the French novelist and playwright Jean Genet that celebrates this treasure of our gay heritage, and argues for the centrality of Genet's homosexuality to any consideration of his oeuvre. As for Edmund White, he and his work—privileged, literate, sophisticated, hedonistic—remain central to any consideration of gay male upper-middle-class life in late 20th-century America.

Hubert Sorin was an architect and illustrator. He was born in 1962 in Nantes, France, where he received a degree in architecture. He subsequently taught architecture for two years in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Upon his return to Paris, he went to work for Jean-Jacques Ory, who directs the largest architectural office in France. After retiring at the end of 1989, Sorin became an illustrator and did the drawings for *Our Paris*. He died in March 1994, and his ashes are in columbarium 40557 at Père-Lachaise, Paris.

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