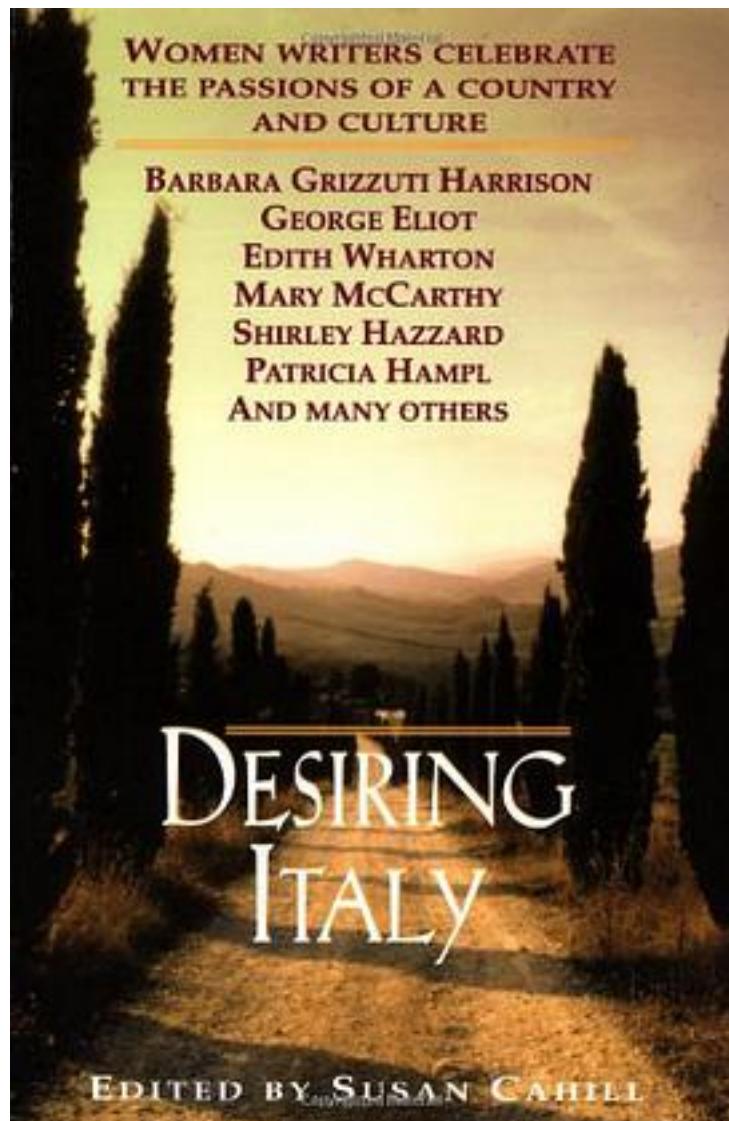


Desiring Italy



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Under the spell of *la dolce vita* . . . For centuries Italy has been many things to many people. In this brilliant anthology and traveler's companion, twenty-eight first-rate women writers reveal why the land that is the heart and soul of European civilization is so seductive to women. Kate Simon walks us through a Siena filled with surprises and luminous beauty. Elizabeth Spencer writes of first coming to Italy and finding "home." Shirley Hazzard explores the mysteries of Naples. Muriel Spark writes on Venice, Edith Wharton on Rome, George Eliot on Florence, Barbara Grizzuti Harrison on San Gimignano, Patricia Hampl on Assisi. Other wonderful writers contemplate the idiosyncratic glories of Italy's architecture, cooking, art, and landscape; its culture; its places and people. As these writers tell their stories--in fiction, memoir, and essay--of coming to understand Italy, they explore the complexity of their passions for it, mingling affection and ecstasy with intellectual curiosity. Organized geographically--from northern Italy to Rome and on to the south, *Desiring Italy* offers an enchanting journey for readers and travelers.

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