

# Mom, the flag, and apple pie: Great American writers on great American things



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Great American Things BY TOM WOLFE What a spread! What a feast! What a weenie roast we have here! Thirty great American writers writing about great American things . . . very tasty! Don't delay! Get right to it! I won't hold you up! I'm only here to put on record the things about America that mean the most to American writers themselves. Not the things that turn up in their books and articles—I mean the things that writers actually care about, the things that set off the deepest feelings they know. Don't expect them to mention such matters. Not for a moment! They're like everybody else in that respect—they'd sooner cut a main vein! The perfect example is the well-known

American writer But perhaps it's best not to say exactly which well-known American writer since we're about to surprise him in an intimate act. He's in his apartment, a seven-room apartment on Riverside Drive, on the West Side of Manhattan, in his study, seated at his desk. As we approach from the rear, we notice a bald spot on the crown of his head. It's about the size of a Ritz cracker, this bald spot, freckled and toasty brown. Gloriously suntanned, in fact. Mound this bald spot swirls a corona of dark brown hair that becomes quite thick by the time it completes its mad Byronic rush down the back over his turtleneck and out to the side in great bushes over his ears. He knows the days of covered ears are numbered, because this particular look has, become somewhat low rent. When he was coming back from his father's funeral,

作者介绍:

目录:

[Mom, the flag, and apple pie: Great American writers on great American things\\_下载链接1\\_](#)

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评论

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