

Against Joie de Vivre



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著者:Phillip Lopate

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'Over the years I have developed a distaste for the spectacle of joie de vivre, the knack of knowing how to live,' begins the title essay by Phillip Lopate. This rejoinder to the cult of hedonism and forced conviviality moves from a critique of the false sentimentalization of children and the elderly to a sardonic look at the social rite of the dinner party, on to a moving personal testament to the 'hungry soul'. Lopate's special gift is his ability to give us not only sophisticated cultural commentary in a dazzling collection of essays but also to bring to his subjects an engaging honesty and openness that invite us to experience the world along with him. Also included here are Lopate's inspiring account of his production of Chekhov's Uncle Vanya with a group of preadolescents, a look at the tradition of the personal essay, and a soul-searching piece on the suicide of a schoolteacher and its effect on his students and fellow teachers. By turns humorous, learned, celebratory, and elegiac, Lopate displays a keen intelligence and a flair for language that turn bits of common, everyday life into resonant narrative. This collection maintains a conversational charm while taking the contemporary personal essay to a new level of complexity and candour.

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