

# Created in Darkness by Troubled Americans: The Best of McSweeney's Humor Category

From Eggers, Dave (EDT)/ Shay, Kevin J. (EDT)/ Epstein, Lee (EDT)/ Warner, John (EDT)/ Kleid, Suzanne (ED

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## CREATED IN DARKNESS BY TROUBLED AMERICANS



### THE BEST OF McSWEENEY'S HUMOR CATEGORY

"Achieves the sensation of being hit by a hip, humorous train. . . . Breaks mold after mold in hilarious fashion." —*The New York Times*

Introductions by Harry Magnan, Exalted Ruler of Elks Lodge #3,  
and Dave Eggers

Edited by Dave Eggers, Kevin Shay, Lee Epstein, John Warner, and Suzanne Kleid

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#712031 in Books Eggers, Dave (EDT)/ Shay, Kevin J. (EDT)/ Epstein, Lee (EDT)/ Warner, John (EDT)/ Kleid, Suzanne (ED 2005-06-14 2005-06-14 Original language: English PDF # 1 7.99 x .55 x 5.201, .43 #File Name: 1400076854272 pages | File size: 53.Mb

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purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Created in Darkness by Troubled Americans: The Best of McSweeney's Humor Category*:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Hilarious and has stood up well to time  
By Julie  
Hilarious collection of short stories and humorous lists. I have purchased several copies of this book as gifts - as it is perfect for the intelligent reader with a good sense of humor and an appreciation of sarcasm and absurd comedy.  
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I wanted better because I love McSweeney's but maybe it has jumped ...  
By L. W.  
It was OK. I wanted better because I love McSweeney's but maybe it has jumped the shark, as they say.  
1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Hysterical  
By Ria Darling  
I love this book. It's kind of off-beat humor just hits home. Favorite pieces are the "Death Star Trash Compactor" and "Rapper or Personal Hygiene Product". This book can sit on my shelf and whenever I take it out it promises a laugh. Great gift. Also like *Mirth of a Nation* but this is a little more off-beat.

Now more than ever, Americans are troubled by questions. As sweaty modernity thrusts itself upon us, the veil of ignorance that cloaked our nation hangs in tatters, tattered tatters. Our "funny bones" are neither fun nor bony. Glum is the new giddy, and the old giddy wasn't too giddy to begin with. What can be done to stop this relentless march of drabbery? Nothing. But perhaps this book can be used to dull the pain. Included herein: The Ten Worst Films of All Time, as Reviewed by Ezra Pound over Italian Radio  
Unused Audio Commentary by Howard Zinn and Noam Chomsky, Recorded Summer 2002, for *The Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring DVD (Platinum Series Extended Edition)*, Part One. How Important Moments in My Life Would Have Been Different If I Was Shot in the Stomach  
My Beard, Reviewed  
Circumstances under Which I Would Have Sex with Some of My Fellow Jurors  
Words That Would Make Nice Names for Babies, If It Weren't for Their Unsuitable Meanings  
As a Porn Movie Titler, I May Lack Promise  
Ineffective Ways to Subdue a Jaguar  
Eleven Lunch Meats I Have Invented  
Four Things I Would Have Said to Sylvia Plath if I Had Been Her Boyfriend  
And much, much more, including 20 brilliant new lists . . .

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*Created in Darkness by Troubled Americans: The Best of McSweeney's, Humor Category*, a collection from the clever young writers that bring us the McSweeney's literary journal and Web site, and co-edited by their leader, Dave Eggers, is funny from the first page. And by "first page," we mean the table contents. Of course not every essay, list, and swatch of dialogue are created equal, but the collection has many tasty morsels that are well worth a read, a read to friends, and then a re-read, after a decent interval has elapsed. Most appealing in the book's starting lineup is J.M. Tyree's "On the Implausibility of the Death Star's Trash Compactor." Humorous as well as thought-provoking, this essay makes the perfect amuse bouche for what is arguably the collection's main course of hilarity, "Fire: the Next Sharp Stick?", "Candle Party," and "Unused Audio Commentary by Howard Zinn and Noam Chomsky, Recorded Summer 2002, for the *Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring DVD (Platinum Series Extended Version)*, Part One," all to be found in the early middle. Though a familiarity with candle parties, Howard Zinn, sharp sticks, and other topics satirized in this book is helpful, it's not necessarily required for understanding the jokes. The biggest risk here is binge-reading, as you may exchange audible laughter for the feeling that you are being force-fed an ice cream sundae. If you pace yourself--say no more than four to six pieces at a time--you should have the energy for the final third, including the funny list marathon at the end. Or save a few portions for later when you are really starving for a good laugh. --Leah Weathers  
by From Publishers Weekly  
In his introduction, McSweeney's founder Eggers says the goal of these short pieces, most of which originally appeared on the McSweeney's Web site, is to be "funny without being humorous," which is an open invitation for critical bashing. It's true that the short stories, essays and lists—oh, so many lists—tend not to have, or even try for, the sort of universal appeal that turns stand-up comedians into bestselling authors. Readers' reactions will depend on whether they share the same level of erudition and love for pop culture as the authors. Greg Purcell's spot-on impression of the deranged voice of Ezra Pound's later writings, for example, will work only for those who know Pound's work, while the "Journal of a New COBRA Recruit" will be equally incomprehensible to people who didn't grow up with GI Joe in the 1980s. If you get the jokes, though, they can be side-splittingly hilarious. Of course, there are misfires, especially those that play with the idea of trying and failing to be funny. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.  
From School Library Journal  
Adult/High School—This lively and amusing anthology brings together material that has appeared previously in either McSweeney's print edition or Web-site version. Anecdotes, plays, jokes, fake reviews, and lists are included, all poised to produce a quick chuckle. The pieces can be hit-or-miss and, like a lot of humor, they rely on readers knowing the references made to get the laughs, like Greg Purcell's "A Letter from Ezra Pound to Billy Wilder," which comes off quite dry unless one really knows Pound's style of criticism. The majority, though, touch more universal points. Christopher Monks's "Group Mobilization as a Desperate Cry for Help" places a nameless narrator organizing a picket line outside his girlfriend's house to protest her dumping him, in a manner worthy of a good Saturday Night Live sketch. Likewise, "My Beard ed" by Chris Bachelder fabulously satirizes all the feelings of a self-deprecating person and the idea of self-image. All the pieces are short, many two pages or less. While no one will ever

put this anthology on a literary best list, it does give a nice break from more serious reading and may even entice reluctant readers.—Matthew L. Moffett, Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.