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Blue Guide Literary Companion London (Blue Guides)



Synopsis

An entertaining anthology of excerpts from letters, diaries, novels, and poetry written in or about London. In tandem with Blue Guide Literary Companion Rome, this is an anthology of excerpts from prose and poetry written in or about London, prefaced by brief biographical and contextual notes. Perfect for taking on vacation or as preparatory reading before a visit-or as entertainment for lovers of London and literature. Black-and-white illustrations throughout

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Customer Reviews

The Blue Guides authors and editorial team are based in London, England.

A very impressive selection of literary writings that covers a span from the Early Modern era to the late 20th century. Robin Saikia is a reasonably savvy reader with an eye on the vivid and the characteristic, therefore the passages he handpicks are consistently entertaining. He also has a taste which is catholic enough to harbor both the highbrow classics and the popular reads. It also reminds me how English was once spoken with a distinct national accent, before it democratizes itself and opens access to speakers like myself. The most laudable thing, however, is that Saikia resolutely resists the idea of rosy-painting London into a city of glamour and poseur, so as to suit the snobbery of certain branches of modern tourism. Admittedly there are passages on the clique groups or high-end fashion, but for most of the time the book candidly exposes the gritty side of London, witnessed and lived by the down-trodden and the forgotten. It covers crimes, poverty,

addictions and traumas, yet above these there is the everyday philosophy of those who "live in the gutters and gaze at the stars". Saikia's first--and final--point is that London is a place we love-and-hate, or even love to hate, which he confidently sees as a universal experience of urban residents. As a former city dweller, I have to admit that this resonates with me strongly. For such resonance, this book is worth a five-star.

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