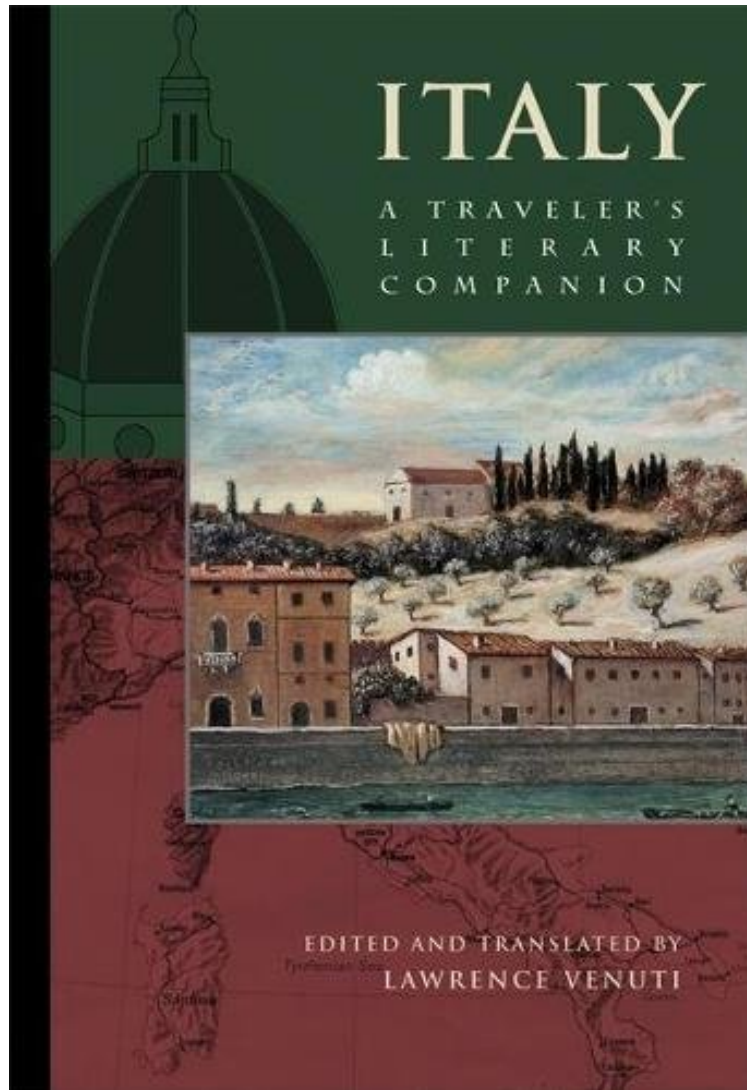


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## Italy: A Traveler's Literary Companion (Traveler's Literary Companions)

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**From Whereabouts Press : Italy: A Traveler's Literary Companion (Traveler's Literary Companions)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Italy: A Traveler's Literary Companion (Traveler's Literary Companions):

2 of 6 people found the following review helpful. DisappointingBy babsMaybe it's just me, but these stories were depressing, stories of wierd people doing wierd things. I chose it to read while flying home from a trip to Italy. I have not finished it, but I will have to push myself to finish it. I enjoy reading stories about countries when I travel to them.

Maybe someone else will reply to this and give me a reason to finish reading these stories! I am over 60, so I think I know a good story when I read one. Please someone give me some perspective, some argument, some insight. 0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Three Stars By Nananice book 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Worthwhile Introduction to Italian Writers By Reader in Tokyo This book was published in 2003 and collected 23 works by as many authors. So far as could be determined, there were 22 short stories and 1 excerpt from a novel. The oldest authors were Luigi Pirandello (1867-1936), Massimo Bontempelli (1878-1960), and Federigo Tozzi (1883-1920). The most recent were Barbara Alberti (1946-), Tiziano Scarpa (1963-), and Marilia Mazzeo (1972-). Others included Corrado Alvaro, Lalla Romano, Dino Buzzati, Alberto Moravia, Romano Bilenchi, Natalia Ginzburg, Mario Rigoni-Stern, Andrea Camilleri, Luigi Malerba, Goffredo Parise, Dacia Maraini and Antonio Tabucchi. Of all the writers, six were women. The works ranged from 1913 (Pirandello) to the 1990s (Rigoni-Stern, Camilleri, Claudio Magris, Tabucchi, Scarpa, Mazzeo). It appeared that all decades in between were covered, except for the 1940s and 80s. Nearly half of the pieces in the book dated from the 1970s and after. The editor translated all the selections himself, and tried to provide a wide range of genres, from realism and irony, fantasy and satire to detective stories. His introduction said that two of the authors appeared in English for the first time (Mazzeo, Scarpa). Several others were translated in an attempt to make them more widely known in English (Romano, Domenico Rea). The editor tried also to include stories set in both the major tourist destinations -- Rome, Florence, Venice, Naples, Capri -- as well as places like Turin, Milan, the Veneto, Trieste and Palermo. And to cover a range of social classes (bourgeois, laborers) locations (city, country) and occupations (waiters, businessmen, dressmakers, detectives). Another interest was depicting relations between Italians and foreigners, and between Italians from different regions. Besides showing Italy and Italians in detail, the editor wished to challenge typical images of the nation. By far the most geographically specific and atmospheric for this reader was a story by Alberto Savinio from the 1930s describing a walk around Capri ("Noontide at Anacapri"). Relations between Italians from different regions were described memorably and humorously in a story by Bilenchi from the 1930s, in which the Tuscan narrator was driven to distraction when locals kept calling him a hick from another region ("A Geographical Error"). In "The Black Kid" by Pirandello (1913), the Sicilian narrator's common sense and psychological insight were set off against a foreigner's logically impeccable but emotionally inadequate behavior. In the "The Bender" by Tozzi from the 1920s, a man from Tuscany learned that too much thinking put an emotional attachment out of reach. In Moravia's story "The Thinker" from the 1940s, a Roman waiter's inability to keep silent caused misfortune. Buzzati's parable-like story from the 1960s showed a Milanese who regretted too late his greedy behavior. Pieces with interesting social criticism were Parise's "Well Off," which portrayed a corrupt, newly rich businessman and his spoiled family, and Malerba's "The Game" from the 1970s, which poked fun at a spineless father's attempt to understand the younger generation. Maraini's story from the 1960s reversed male-female stereotypes, with a woman living separate lives in Milan and Rome ("The Other Family"). With a few exceptions, most enjoyable for this reader were the stories by the earlier writers in this collection. With these pieces the collection accomplished its aims, in my opinion. By comparison, many of the works from the 1960s and after seemed either cerebral and experimental on the one hand or mildly entertaining but lacking in depth on the other (the detective stories). For the 20th century, omitted from this collection were writers like Guido Nobili and Vasco Pratolini on Florence, Grazia Deledda on Sardinia, Giovanni Comisso on the Veneto, Carlo Levi on Basilicata, Cesare Pavese on Piedmont, Elio Vittorini and Leonardo Sciascia on Sicily, Elsa Morante and Pier Paolo Pasolini on Rome, Anna Maria Ortese on Naples, and Giorgio Bassani and Pier Vittorio Tondelli on Emilia-Romagna. Among the other authors for whom space was lacking in this short book: Italo Svevo, Carlo Emilio Gadda, Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, Curzio Malaparte, Ignazio Silone, Italo Calvino and Umberto Eco. Only two of the authors in the collection were under 55 years of age; one wondered where were the younger Italian writers. Other fairly recent anthologies of Italian writing include Name and Tears and Other Stories: Forty Years of Italian Fiction (1990) and The Quality of Light: Modern Italian Short Stories (1993), which introduced 20-25 authors each, and Italian Tales: An Anthology of Contemporary Italian Fiction (2004). All of these contain generous amounts of experimental, opaque writing similar to that of many authors in the present collection from the 1960s and after. Earlier, generally more readable collections include Modern Italian Short Stories (1954), Modern Italian Stories (1955), Great Italian Short Stories (1959), Italian Stories of Today (1959), Italian Writing Today (1967) and the Penguin Book of Italian Short Stories (1969). Traveller's Literary Companion to Italy (1998), edited by Martin Garrett, contains very brief excerpts of more than 70 works by Italian writers, from Roman times to the present, together with much background on authors and regions.

Italy's rising literary stars join some of its best-known writers — including Nobel-laureate Luigi Pirandello, Natalia Ginzburg, Alberto Moravia, and Antonio Tabucchi — to take the reader on a panoramic tour of both city and countryside, across the social spectrum, surveying the country's rich cultural history. Explore Italy's popular tourist destinations and out-of-the-way spots under the fresh and even startling light cast by these twenty-three diverse and exciting stories, most of which are available here in English for the first time. For those who wish to reach beyond the stereotypes and get an insider's view to discover an Italy that's off the beaten path, as well as new insights along familiar, well-traveled roads, these stories — arranged geographically for the traveler, armchair or otherwise — are an

excellent place to start. Contributors include Barbara Alberti, Corrado Alvaro, Romano Bilenchi, Massimo Bontempelli, Dino Buzzati, Andrea Camilleri, Natalia Ginzburg, Claudio Magris, Marilia Mazzeo, Luigi Malerba, Dacia Maraini, Maria Messina, Alberto Moravia, Aldo Palazzeschi, Goffredo Parise, Luigi Pirandello, Domenico Rea, Mario Rigoni Stern, Lalla Romano, Alberto Savinio, Tiziano Scarpa, Antonio Tabucchi, and Federigo Tozzi.

About the Author Lawrence Venuti is a distinguished translator of Italian literature, as well as an internationally known translation theorist and historian. He has lived in Florence and Rome and has lectured extensively throughout Italy. He has received awards from PEN America Center, the NEA and the NEH. He reviews Italian fiction for "The New York Times" and is professor of English at Temple University in Philadelphia.