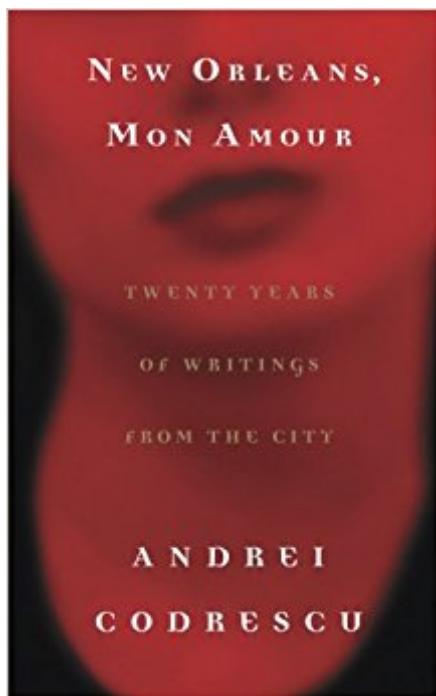


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# New Orleans, Mon Amour: Twenty Years Of Writings From The City



## Synopsis

For two decades NPR commentator Andrei Codrescu has been living in and writing about his adopted city, where, as he puts it, the official language is dreams. How apt that a refugee born in Transylvania found his home in a place where vampires roam the streets and voodoo queens live around the corner; where cemeteries are the most popular picnic spots, the ghosts of poets, prostitutes, and pirates are palpable, and in the French Quarter, no one ever sleeps. Codrescu's essays have been called "satirical gems," "subversive," "sardonic and stunning," "funny," "gonzo," "wittily poignant," and "perverse"-here is a writer who perfectly mirrors the wild, voluptuous, bohemian character of New Orleans itself. This retrospective follows him from newcomer to near native: first seduced by the lush banana trees in his backyard and the sensual aroma of coffee at the cafÃ© down the block, Codrescu soon becomes a Window Gang regular at the infamous bar Molly's on Decatur, does a stint as King of Krewe de Vieux CarrÃ© at Mardi Gras, befriends artists, musicians, and eccentrics, and exposes the city's underbelly of corruption, warning presciently about the lack of planning for floods in a city high on its own insouciance. Alas, as we all now know, Paradise is lost. *New Orleans, Mon Amour* is an epic love song, a clear-eyed elegy, a cultural celebration, and a thank-you note to New Orleans in its Golden Age.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In this lovely collection of very short essays (many two pages long), gravelly voiced NPR commentator Codrescu sketches finely honed portraits of a fabled city and its equally fabled inhabitants. The author, who has called the Big Easy home for two decades, shows how, like some

gigantic bohemian magnet, New Orleans attracts some of the world's most talented, self-indulgent freaks. Codrescu finds himself quite at home there. He expertly weaves pages of New Orleans history through his stories of personal discovery and debauchery. The last few essays, written post-Katrina, radiate simultaneous anger and clarity. Full of pride and defensiveness, Codrescu closes the collection ruminating about rebuilding the city and his longing to return to its rhythms and eccentricities. Despite Codrescu's frustrations, this collection is, in the end, gentle and sweet. Readers can't help coming away from reading it without an abiding hope in the ability of ordinary people, under the worst circumstances, rising to whatever challenges they face. (Jan. 6) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

The author is a popular NPR commentator who, although Romanian born, has been a New Orleans resident since the early 1980s. The release of this collection of essays about the city that occupies his heart could not be timelier; in fact, he has included a half-dozen pieces about its post-Katrina state. Two-page commentaries frequently give way to longer ruminations, but whether within a brief or long space, his remembrances and testimonies about the Big Easy, from the point when he arrived to the present day, share heartfelt moments and characters and conditions that are only discoverable in this most exotic of American cities. Crime is ever present, he admits, but he is equally adamant about how lovable a city it is, a place where many people call the phone numbers of the dead and fully expect the deceased to answer. Yes, living with alligators is, as he says, "an acquired taste," but on the other hand, St. Charles Avenue "has to be the most charming boulevard in the world." A place of uniqueness in all forms. Brad HooperCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

New Orleans is Catholic, pagan, poor, and Bohemian. The music is the Devil's music and we are a cesspool of sin. The Crescent City. If you ever visit New Orleans you will never forget the time you spent there. If I had never visited New Orleans prior to reading *New Orleans, Mon Amour: Twenty Years of Writings From the City*, I would have made my way there as soon as I finished. I'm listening to Second Line music as I type these words. Codrescu, a Louisiana State University professor, introduced us to the city at ground level. He didn't try to glamorize the city nor did he try to take us on a tour of its most popular places. These essays ranged from the details and familiar faces at the local bar scene to the history of the city's cemeteries and its burying rituals. With each essay, Codrescu takes the reader on a daily walk through the city revealing a hidden treasure each time. Katrina found us dreaming. The world watched New Orleans drown when the levees broke.

Codrescu put it this way: We already knew who's going to pay for all this: the poor. They always do. The whole country's garbage flows down the Mississippi to them. Until now, they turned all that waste into song; they took the sins of America unto themselves. But this blues now is just too big. New Orleans is my favorite city to visit in literature. *New Orleans, Mon Amour: Twenty Years of Writings From the City* reminded me why New Orleans is and always will be my favorite city.

A wonderful collection of essays about New Orleans spanning 2 decades from the mid-80s up to post-Katrina today where "the American dream came unmoored..." Codrescu is one of my favorite poets and essayists he doesn't fail to deliver here. I'm quite partial to Codrescu's use of language..."I like people who stumble through language without any idea of what they might run into. It's what I do. I like myself. Sometimes." As a gifted poet, Codrescu writes with precision, employing an exceptional economy of words and more importantly, always choosing the correct word. (As a result of reading this during the Great Northeastern Spring Floods of 2010, the word "bumbershoot" has returned to my own lexicon!). Codrescu continually employs apt and often humorous metaphors in his writing - there is no short supply of these here..."New Orleans cemeteries look like vast bakeries quietly holding the ancestral loaves. This is no idle metaphor in a city that loves its dead as much as its food. The sense that life and death are locked in amorous gourmandise is everywhere." I have only been to N.O. once, and as much as I loved my time there and long to return, Codrescu has taken me there and has made his city so much more real for me. He makes me wonderfully aware of the difference of seeing the city as a tourist and as a Bohemian New Orleansian. That's not to say he doesn't appreciate and accept us tacky tourists for our ever-present and essential role in his city..."If you don't like visitors, you shouldn't live in New Orleans. ... You don't have to be a whore if you live in a whorehouse, but it helps. Everybody who lives here works for the house, like it or not." I highly recommend this book for those interested in a fine collection of short essays with a one-of-a-kind take on perhaps the most unique of all American cities. I read this on my Kindle and will return to these selections again and again - hopefully in preparation for a return trip before too long.

I've been a fan of Codrescu for years through his spoken word bits he's done on National Public Radio (NPR). This is a collection of essays that he's written over a twenty year period about his adopted city of New Orleans, and it is a marvelous read. Codrescu's humor and insight are always sharp, and ordering this collection in this way allows the reader to follow his love affair with the city as it evolves from an initial infatuation to a deep and abiding love (the good and the bad), with the

dark, unhappy moments that come with the package. Knowing about hurricane Katrina and post-Katrina New Orleans only serves to make many of his early observations even more relevant and powerful. Codrescu's essays reveal an ever-present awareness, likely shared by his neighbors, that the City was living on the edge of disaster. I normally recommend reading collections like this in bits and pieces, and, certainly, one could do that, but the coherency of this anthology is so striking that I'd suggest taking it all in as you would a memoir or biography - a memoir is what this anthology turns out to be.

Contains lots of humor and vivid sensuality of what it's like to live in modern bohemian New Orleans. If Codrescu wanted to include writing about Katrina and its aftermath, why leave that for the final few pages? It leaves an otherwise pleasant book on a note of despair and political bitterness. Better to have left this out entirely as it didn't fit the tone of the rest of the book. But that shouldn't dissuade anyone interested in New Orleans and its people and history from reading the first 95%.

Great collection of stories. Easy to read in short intervals. I plan to add this to collection of books I keep in my guest room.

enjoyed this book. not an ongoing storyline, just snippets and chapters of only-in-NOLA happenings. very surprised a foreign-born gentleman gets New Orleans. there's no middle road for this city. u either love it or hate it. i just happen to love it. i call it the last holdout of personal freedom left in homogenized USA. the minute i get my feet on Bourbon Street, i feel alive. it's very obvious the author feels the same. the smells, the history, the oddballs (thank goodness)....it's all right here for ur pleasure. will remind u why u fell in love to begin with and/or make u fall in love again.

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