

American Histories

author: John Edgar Wideman

2026-06

Synopsis

author	John Edgar Wideman
readBy	Dion Graham
inLanguage	english

In this singular collection, John Edgar Wideman, the acclaimed author of *Writing to Save a Life*, blends the personal, historical, and political to invent complex, charged stories about love, death, struggle, and what we owe each other. With characters ranging from everyday Americans to Jean-Michel Basquiat to Nat Turner, *American Histories* is a journey through time, experience, and the soul of our country.

"JB & FD" reimagines conversations between John Brown, the antislavery crusader who famously raided Harper's Ferry, Virginia, and Frederick Douglass, the abolitionist and orator, conversations that belie the myth of race and produce a fantastical, ethically rich correspondence that spans years and ideologies. "Maps and Ledgers" eavesdrops on a brother and sister today as they ponder their father's killing of another man. "Williamsburg Bridge" sits inside a man sitting on a bridge who contemplates his life before he decides to jump. "My Dead" is a story about how the already-departed demand more time, more space in the lives of those who survive them.

Navigating an extraordinary range of subject and tone, Wideman challenges the boundaries of traditional forms, and delivers unforgettable, immersive narratives that touch the very core of what it means to be alive. An extended meditation on family, history, and loss, *American Histories* weaves together historical fact, philosophical wisdom, and deeply personal vignettes. More than the sum of its parts, this is Wideman at his best - emotionally precise and intellectually stimulating - an extraordinary collection by a master.

Reader's comments

comment 1:

â€"â€" ()