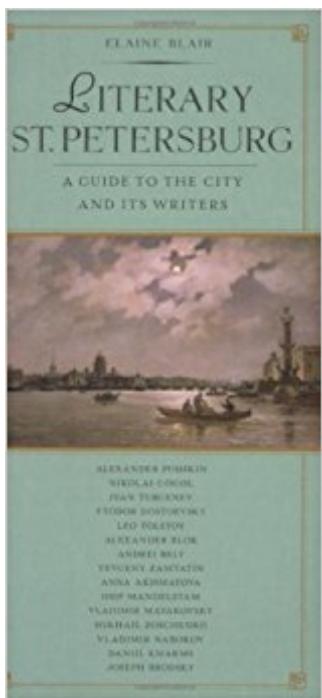


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Literary St. Petersburg: A Guide To The City And Its Writers



Synopsis

Much of Russian literature is St. Petersburg literature: set in the city, about the city, or written by writers who lived there. For each of the fifteen profiled writers, there is a biographical sketch focusing on his or her relationship to the city and a sense of his or her work, along with a list of St. Petersburg sites associated with the writer and the literary works. Travelers can wander through the museum where a teenage Vladimir Nabokov romanced his girlfriend and see the prison where Anna Akhmatova was inspired to write her poem about the Great Terror. They can find the statue that comes to life in Pushkin's poem The Bronze Horseman and visit the square where Crime and Punishment's murderer/hero kneels to ask God's forgiveness. The images included are particularly striking: a photo taken in the courtroom where the young Joseph Brodsky made his electrifying defense of his credentials as a poet; a portrait of Akhmatova, a symbol of artistic integrity in the face of the most severe persecution; and documentary photographs spanning the upheavals of twentieth century Russia. Authors included are: Anna Akhmatova, Andrei Bely, Aleksandr Blok, Joseph Brodsky, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Nikolai Gogol, Daniil Kharms, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Osip Mandelstam, Vladimir Nabokov, Alexander Pushkin, Leo Tolstoy, Ivan Turgenev, Yevgeny Zamyatin, Mikhail Zoshchenko.

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Customer Reviews

"A guide to famous St. Petersburg writers from Alexander Pushkin to Josef Brodsky with the expected information about museums and statues, also displays Blair's refined critical temperament: It's full of nuanced literary insights into the writers that one would never find in a Fodor's or

Frommer's." --Philadelphia Inquirer"This compact guide begins with Russian literature's birth in the former capital of imperial Russia..Blair's itineraries are based on the lives of 15 of Russia's most important writers...[and open] the city, if not the brooding Russian psyche, to the traveler." --San Francisco Chronicle

Elaine Blair was born in St. Petersburg. She is on the staff of The New York Review of Books. Her essays and reviews have appeared in The New York Review of Books, The American Scholar, The Nation, Slate, and The Village Voice.

From Pushkin to Brodsky this work walks in the footsteps of the great Russian writers of St. Petersburg. We stop in the places of significance for them in their lives and in their writing, in the lives of their characters also.I enjoyed reading about Mandelstam's connection to the synagogue of his childhood. I learned that St. Petersburg had no strictly Jewish quarter but that the district of the synagogue had many Jewish families. I heard the nostalgia in the voice of Brodsky as he described the district he would first return to , if he could visit the city from his American exile, again.This is a work rich in literary information which will enrich any lover of Russian Literature.

If you are going to St. Petersburg, pick up this book before you go, along with a favorite work by one of the 15 authors profiled. Blair offers a quick thumbnail sketch of each author's work, followed by an annotated listing of important St. Petersburg places in their life and work, from museums to residences and byways and squares. Thin and compact, this is an easy tote-along that will provide a necessary cultural layer to your travels. After all, as the introduction notes, "Russian literature began in St. Petersburg." (Reviewed inÂ A Russian Life)

There's nothing wrong with this book, except for its title. Far from being a Literary Guide to S.Petersburg is a neat (though very basic) dictionary including some writers connected with the city with a short list of places connected to them there. Neither the number of writers reviewed nor the "case by case" approach deserves the ambitious title of Literary Guide. Probably not the fault of the writer, but disappointing nonetheless...

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