



Crooning

John Gregory Dunne

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“Funny, outrageous, cynical, and spellbinding.”—People magazine.

In this first-ever digital edition of John Gregory Dunne’s acclaimed collection *Crooning*, readers find evidence from the get-go confirming the writer’s reputation as one of the most clear-seeing, incisive observers of the American cultural and political scene. In sixteen sharp, distinctively voiced essays, Dunne profiles a blacklisted Hollywood screenwriter who three decades later passed himself off as a young Chicano novelist; considers the Kennedy men and conservative William F. Buckley, takes us inside California’s labyrinthine water politics and criminal justice system, details the workings of the Los Angeles county morgue, and is on the ground observing in Jerusalem just weeks before the intifada enveloped the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1987.

Here, too, are superbly entertaining accounts of the Hollywood star system and studio machine, Dunne drawing on two decades of experience as an L.A.-based journalist and fiction-writer with regular forays into screenwriting. He is candid and insightful about the business of writing and life of the dedicated writer as well. In “Laying Pipe,” Dunne chronicles the five-year experience of writing his epic novel *The Red White and Blue*. And in “Critical,” he focuses on book reviews and reviewers from his perspective as an author who, along with manifold strong notices, also received the occasional critical knock. He names names, and takes the opportunity to fire back at one of his critics.

Early in *Crooning*, Dunne tells us that when he tires of the writing grind, he fantasizes about being a Johnny Mercer-like crooner, then reveals a moment later that he is tone deaf. The title, then, is playful - and in more than one way. Instead of writing sweet narrative melodies, Dunne built his career through work that exposes, challenges, thrums with opinion, and bristles with spiky, knowing humor. Download *Crooning* and dive into a book of provocative reportage, great stories, and witty, vigorous prose.

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