



# **Southern Bound: A Gulf Coast Journalist on Books, Writers, and Literary Pilgrimages of the Heart**

*John S. Sledge*

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Southern Bound represents a running conversation on books, writers, and literary travel written for the Mobile Press-Register Books page from 1995 to 2011 by John S. Sledge. The collection includes more than one hundred of the best pieces culled from Sledge's total output of approximately seven hundred columns. Numerous classic authors are celebrated in these pages, including Homer, Plato, Gibbon, Melville, Proust, Conrad, Cather, and Steinbeck as well as modern writers such as Walter Edgar, Tom Franklin, and Eugene Walter.

While some of the essays are relatively straightforward book reviews, others present meditative and deeply personal perspectives on the author's literary experiences such as serving on the jury in the play version *To Kill a Mockingbird*; spending the night alone in a Jesuit college library's venerable stacks; rambling through funky New Orleans bookshops; talking to Square Books owner Richard Howorth while overlooking the Oxford, Mississippi courthouse; rereading *Treasure Island* on the shores of Mobile Bay; and remembering a beloved father's favorite books. Engaging and spirited, *Southern Bound* represents the critical art at its most accessible and will prove entertaining fare for anyone who loves the written word.

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