



New Jersey Noir

Joyce Carol Oates (Editor) , Jonathan Safran Foer (Contributor) , Lou Manfredo (Contributor) , S.A. Solomon (Contributor) , Bradford Morrow (Contributor) , Jonathan Santlofer (Contributor) , Jeffrey Ford (Contributor) , S.J. Rozan (Contributor) , more... Barry N. Malzberg (Contributor) , Bill Pronzini (Contributor) , Hirsh Sawhney (Contributor) , Robert Arellano (Contributor) , Robert Pinsky (Contributor) , Edmund White (Contributor) , Richard Burgin (Contributor) , Paul Muldoon (Contributor) , Sheila Kohler (Contributor) , C.K. Williams (Contributor) , Gerald Stern (Contributor) , Michael Carroll (Contributor) ...less

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"Oates's introduction to Akashic's noir volume dedicated to the Garden State, with its evocative definition of the genre, is alone worth the price of the book . . . Poems by C.K. Williams, Paul Muldoon, and others--plus photos by Gerald Slota--enhance this distinguished entry."

-- **Publishers Weekly**

"It was inevitable that this fine noir series would reach New Jersey. It took longer than some readers might have wanted, but, oh boy, was it worth the wait . . . More than most of the entries in the series, this volume is about mood and atmosphere more than it is about plot and character . . . It should go without saying that regular readers of the noir series will seek this one out, but beyond that, the book also serves as a very good introduction to what is a popular but often misunderstood term and style of writing."

-- **Booklist** , Starred Review

"A lovingly collected assortment of tales and poems that range from the disturbing to the darkly humorous."

-- **Shelf Awareness**

Featuring brand-new stories (and a few poems) by: Joyce Carol Oates, Jonathan Safran Foer, Robert Pinsky, Edmund White & Michael Carroll, Richard Burgin, Paul Muldoon, Sheila Kohler, C.K. Williams, Gerald Stern, Lou Manfredo, S.A. Solomon, Bradford Morrow, Jonathan Santlofer, Jeffrey Ford, S.J. Rozan, Barry N. Malzberg & Bill Pronzini, Hirsh Sawhney, and Robert Arellano.

From the introduction by Joyce Carol Oates:

". . . The most civilized and 'decent' among us find that we are complicit with the most brutal murderers. We enter into literally unspeakable alliances--of which we dare not speak except through the obliquities and indirections of fiction, poetry, and visual art of the sort gathered here in *New Jersey Noir*."

New Jersey Noir Details

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Format : Paperback 290 pages

Genre : Fiction, Short Stories, Mystery, Noir

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From Reader Review New Jersey Noir for online ebook

Beth Hough says

Uneven, but interesting.

Deb says

I usually prefer novels to short stories, largely because by the time I've gotten into the short story, it's over, but occasionally I read them for a change of pace.

Have been watching The Sopranos on DVD and thought New Jersey Noir would complement it beautifully. I was not disappointed. Joyce Carol Oates edited the collection, and contributes one of her own stories. Other authors I was familiar with were Robert Pinsky and Jonathan Safran Foer.

Good stories, almost every one of them. Worth reading, IMHO>

John says

I feel like everything gets four stars lately - but I haven't read a short story anthology as gripping as this one in a while. It took the easiest routes to my heart: crime, variety, and a New Jersey backdrop.

Sue says

I liked some of these short stories. Didn't finish them all however.

Kevin Simons says

I should have realized when I read "Brooklyn Noir" back in 2004 that I was looking at the beginning of a series. I guess I never see things coming, though, until they're about to flatten me as they thunder past. Just eight years later and the list of titles in the "Noir" series reads like an exhausting travel itinerary. Somehow an editor scraped "Orange County Noir" together a few years back. I've been to Orange County and noir was always just about the furthest French word from my mind every time. Quelle damage!

So the concept has taken off. Congratulations. I've only read "Brooklyn" and now "New Jersey," and they were both pretty uneven. We should expect something different from anthologies? Probably not. What bugs me, at least a little, is the execution of noir. Is it even something writers should aspire to? Of course the idea comes from film, where the blackness of the shadows onscreen match the motivations of the characters and the double-crossing really pops. Does it work as fiction, though? To her credit, Joyce Carol Oates makes a decent fist of defining, or trying to define, noir in her introduction. She checks the appropriate boxes and tips her hat in the right directions (Raymond Chandler), but the stories that follow mostly miss the mark she's laid down for them. She notes that there has to be a femme fatale, and she's right. But I'm hardpressed just having finished reading the damn thing to remember even one. Jonathan Safran Foer comes closest; his story is

really solid and not just creepy. And there's the problem. We have a halfway decent collection of stories here but mostly they're not much different from what you'd expect from a garden variety detective story. What makes them noir? It has to be more than just seedy, or creepy, or drug- and alcohol-fueled. Some stories flat out stink.

But I can't stop them. Not that I'd want to, anyway, but we all know that I can't. There are several more titles in the pipeline and the concept is so vague and has so much momentum that they can play it out for years. That's fine, too. I just won't be buying.

Rainey says

Reading for BookRiot.com Read Harder Challenge on GoodReads.com

Ken Dowell says

Stories set in very real places with a touch of the kind of Jersey legend that was created by shows like the Sopranos and Boardwalk Empire. What constitutes "noir" in New Jersey? There's the Newark morgue workers cutting the hair off the corpses to sell for wigs. On a more gruesome note there's the guy who claimed to cut up Jimmy Hoffa's body and bury the parts in the end zone of the still under construction Giants Stadium. One of my favorites stories, "Soul Anatomy," is about cops and politicians in Camden. It was written by Lou Manfredo, who worked in the Brooklyn criminal justice system for 25 years. You can assume he knows noir. Another of my favorites is "Run Kiss Daddy" by Joyce Carol Oates about a reconstituted family in a lakefront home in the northwest part of the state. I can't tell you the noir element of this one or I'd completely spoil it.

There is some poetry as well, my favorite of which is "Newark Black 1943-1954" by C.K. Williams.
"Miles of black turnpike and parkway pavement
scrolled out onto the soil of the no-longer farms."

The book is part of a series so you can get Brooklyn Noir, Baltimore Noir or any of several dozen others. For most the book about places they've lived will be of most interest. If the New Jersey edition is any indication of the quality of the stories, I'd expect most of them to be pretty good.

Jan says

I thought it was a fabulous collection of stories. Very dark and at times depressing (AKA, good reading!) I'm from New Jersey, what can I say? And I love Joyce Carol Oates, who was the editor. Her own story, which ends the book, is particularly dark. I highly recommend this. This is part of a "Noir" series set in various locales around the country and the world. I'll probably check out others soon.

Martie Nees Record says

I am not usually a fan of short stories but these were great...maybe because I live in NJ and I am of Joyce

Carol Oates.

Stephanie says

I did not care for this book at all. I am not really into short story / poetry compilations unless the material is exceptional, however, most of this stuff reads like college English Composition essays. Also annoying, this book tries way too hard to be "dark", including opening with a story set in a morgue. I took it from the library expecting some real macabre stories of things that actually happened in NJ, however, its just a collection of mediocre and badly written stories that could take place anywhere. These writers chose Newark, Jersey City, or Hoboken as the name of their otherwise generic settings and *poof* its "New Jersey Noir". Not recommended, unless you teach a class on "how not to write a short story".

Laura says

I thought this collection of stories set in various NJ towns was OK. I liked the ones set in Hoboken and Asbury Park the best, but I am also partial to those places.

Jack Herbert Christal Gattanella says

Reading with my college students and having a blast.

jewelofthecrowne says

Some of these stories were great; I enjoyed Oates intro and her story. However, this was thus far my least favorite of the Noir collection . Perhaps it's that I am less familiar with the geography in the book than others so the places aren't as vivid for me. The poetry that was included , some of it was very good, but it broke the flow for me. Read the introduction, which was great, and decide if you want more.

Michael says

This was a fun collection of stories, especially since I went to many of their settings while I was a missionary for my church in New Jersey. I was hoping for a little more hard-boiled detective stuff, and there may have a few too many stories about young junkies, but I am a fan of the noir genre and this collection featured much of what I like about it: gritty settings, scarred protagonists, and an overwhelming feeling of claustrophobia. You can read what I've written about the series in general at my website, the LitMap Project.

Content alert: Some profuse language and a some sexuality.

Laura says

This is a really great series! Pick almost any city in the world and you can read about its dark underbelly.

I hadn't realized the difference an editor can make. The stories here had a very different feel than Helsinki Noir. In the introduction, Oates talks about noir and what it is, and I'm not sure our definitions gel. Most of these stories were drug-oriented, which got tired. Also, I picked this up hoping to read about local places. The farthest north these stories are set in is Hoboken. Especially given the writing talent that lives in northern NJ, I had expected better representation.

This is an interesting book, and if you're a fan of Oates, I'd recommend checking it out. I thought about half the stories were good and the other half filler.
