



My 1980s and Other Essays

Wayne Koestenbaum

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Wayne Koestenbaum returns with a zesty and hyper-literate collection of personal and critical essays

Wayne Koestenbaum has been described as "an impossible lovechild from a late-night, drunken three-way between Joan Didion, Roland Barthes, and Susan Sontag" (*Bidoun*). In *My 1980s and Other Essays*, a collection of extravagant range and style, he rises to the challenge of that improbable description.

My 1980s and Other Essays opens with a series of manifestos—or, perhaps more appropriately, a series of impassioned disclosures, intellectual and personal. It then proceeds to wrestle with a series of major cultural figures, the author's own lodestars and lodestones: literary (John Ashbery, Roberto Bolaño, James Schuyler), artistic (Diane Arbus, Cindy Sherman, Andy Warhol), and simply iconic (Brigitte Bardot, Cary Grant, Lana Turner). And then there is the personal—the voice, the style, the flair—that is unquestionably Koestenbaum. It amounts to a kind of intellectual autobiography that culminates in a string of passionate calls to creativity; arguments in favor of detail and nuance, and attention; a defense of pleasure, hunger, and desire in culture and experience.

Koestenbaum is perched on the cusp of being a true public intellectual—his venues are more mainstream than academic, his style is eye-catching, his prose unfailingly witty and passionate, his interests profoundly wide-ranging and popular. *My 1980s* should be the book that pushes Koestenbaum off that cusp and truly into the public eye.

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