



Why New Orleans Matters

Tom Piazza

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Ten years after Hurricane Katrina, revisit Tom Piazza's award-winning appraisal of a city in crisis—with a new afterword placing the story of New Orleans in the context of the ongoing threat to America's coastal populations.

In the decade since Hurricane Katrina devastated the city of New Orleans, Americans have learned much from the resilience of this proud, battered city. And yet, even as the city has regained some of its lost footing, other regions around the country continue to be battered by hurricanes, snow and ice storms, and massive weather events like Superstorm Sandy, which devastated the mid-Atlantic coast seven years later.

Published just months after the storm, *Why New Orleans Matters* was immediately hailed as a passionate and eloquent celebration of the city as both a cultural center and a home to millions of residents from varied—and sometimes precarious—walks of life. Award-winning author Tom Piazza, a longtime New Orleans resident, evoked the sensuous rapture of the city that gave us jazz music and Creole cooking, but also examined its deep undercurrents of corruption, racism, and injustice, and explored how its people endure and transcend those conditions. Perhaps most important, he asked that we all, as Americans consider our shared responsibility to this great and neglected metropolis and all the things it has shared with the world: its grace and beauty, resilience and soul.

In the years since its first publication, Piazza has continued to explore the story of New Orleans and its people in many ways—most notably in his novel *City of Refuge* and as a writer for the acclaimed HBO series *Treme*, created by David Simon. Now, he revisits *Why New Orleans Matters*—and, in an all-new foreword for this edition, re-examines the story of Katrina as a cautionary tale for a nation that has too often neglected both its treasures and, far more important, its people.

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