



Down to a Soundless Sea

Thomas Steinbeck

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Here is an unprecedeted fiction debut that is cause for celebration. Growing up in a family that valued the art of storytelling and the power of oral history, Thomas Steinbeck now follows in his father's footsteps with a brilliant story collection. *Down to a Soundless Sea* resonates with the rich history and culture of California, recalling vivid details of life in Monterey County from the turn of the century through the 1930s. Steinbeck accomplishes an amazing feat: his stories have the feel of classic literature, but his haunting voice, forceful narrative drive, and dazzling imagery are unmistakably his own.

In seven stories, Steinbeck traces the fates and dreams of an eccentric cast of characters, from sailors and ranchers, to doctors and immigrants—as each struggles to carve out a living in the often inhospitable environment of rocky cliffs, crashing surf, and rough patches of land along the California coast and the Big Sur. In “Blind Luck,” a wayward orphan finds his calling at sea, only to learn that life must concede to the whims of authority and the ravages of nature. In “Dark Watcher,” with the country at the start of the Great Depression, a professor craves a plausible discovery to boost his academic standing—and encounters the Indian myth of a shadowed horsemen that may ruin his career. “An Unbecoming Grace” tracks the route of a country physician who cares for an ill-tempered cur—but feels more concern for the well-being of the patient’s beleaguered young wife. The collection concludes with “Sing Fat and the Imperial Duchess of Woo,” a novella that follows the tragic love story between a young apothecary and the woman he hopes to marry.

Deeply felt and richly imagined, full of compelling drama and historical authenticity, *Down to a Soundless Sea* heralds the arrival of a bold new voice in fiction. Thomas Steinbeck has written stories as memorable and rugged as the coastline that inspired them.

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