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Excerpt: 'Portraits and Observations' : NPR

'Portraits and Observations'. At his Black and White Ball in 1966, Truman Capote was, in Cole Porter's words, the top. In the courtyard there was an angel of black stone, and its angel head rose above giant elephant leaves; the stark glass angel eyes, bright as the bleached blue of sailor eyes, stared upward.

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Portraits and Observations, however, was lyrical, beautiful, and excellent. I want to buy a physical copy and flip through it, reading essays at random. Handcarved Coffins was chilling; The Muses are Heard was fascinating; the various portraits of famous people were eye-opening.

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Portraits and Observations is the first volume devoted solely to all the essays ever published by this most beloved of writers. Included are such masterpieces of narrative nonfiction as "The Muses Are Heard" and the short nonfiction novel "Handcarved Coffins," as well as many long-out-of-print essays, including portraits of Mae West, Humphrey Bogart, and Marilyn Monroe.

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Portraits and Observations on Apple Books

Portraits and Observations: The Essays of Truman Capote, by Truman Capote, hardcover, 528 pages, list price: \$28.95. Chapter 1. NEW ORLEANS (1946) In the courtyard there was an angel of black stone, and its angel head rose above giant elephant leaves; the stark glass angel eyes, bright as the bleached blue of sailor eyes, stared upward.

9781400066612: Portraits and Observations: The Essays of ...
Mostly from the Fifties, these "observations" (some essay-length, at least one a full-length book) and "portraits" (biographical sketches of celebrities) show very well Capote's amazing gifts as a stylist.

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Portraits and Observations: The Essays of Truman Capote ...

To really comprehend "Portraits and Observations," its early, almost overheated precociousness and later sense of weariness and dwindled powers, you have to imagine a crater roughly at the center of it: "In Cold Blood," the 1966 book that was ostensibly not altered or elaborated at

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all and that was both the making of Capote,...

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In addition to his other notorious addictions, for much of his life Truman Capote was a raging and exacting workaholic, which explains the tremendous output in varying forms included in Portraits and Observations: The Essays of Truman Capote. One of the few American writers to tackle short and long fiction, nonfiction, plays, film scripts, and reportage, Capote in this volume shows himself to be a hungry and yet tastefully selective observer of human triumphs and foibles.

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