



Talk Stories

Jamaica Kincaid

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From "The Talk of the Town," Jamaica Kincaid's first impressions of snobbish, mobbish New York

Talk Pieces is a collection of Jamaica Kincaid's original writing for the *New Yorker's* "Talk of the Town," composed during the time when she first came to the United States from Antigua, from 1978 to 1983. Kincaid found a unique voice, at once in sync with William Shawn's tone for the quintessential elite insider's magazine, and (though unsigned) all her own--wonderingly alive to the ironies and screwball details that characterized her adopted city. New York is a town that, in return, fast adopts those who embrace it, and in these early pieces Kincaid discovers many of its hilarious secrets and urban mannerisms. She meets Miss Jamaica, visiting from Kingston, and escorts the reader to the West Indian-American Day parade in Brooklyn; she sees Ed Koch don his "Cheshire-cat smile" and watches Tammy Wynette autograph a copy of Lattimore's *Odyssey*; she learns the worlds of publishing and partying, of fashion and popular music, and how to call a cauliflower a crudite.

The book also records Kincaid's development as a young writer--the newcomer who sensitively records her impressions here takes root to become one of our most respected authors.

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