

*A Skeptic's Guide to Writers' Houses*  
By Anne Trubek

Named one of the seven best small-press books of the decade in a column in the *Huffington Post*

"Ms. Trubek is a bewitching and witty travel partner." – *Wall Street Journal*

"Why do people visit writer's homes? What are they looking for and what do they hope to take away that isn't sold in the gift shop? This memoir-travelogue takes you from Thoreau's Concord to Hemingway's Key West, exploring the tracks authors and their fans have laid down over the years. Trubek is a sharp-eyed observer, and you'll wish you could have been her travel companion."—Lev Raphael, *Huffington Post*

"A remarkable book: part travelogue, part rant, part memoir, part literary analysis and urban history, it is like nothing else I've ever read. In wondering why we look to writers' houses for inspiration when we could be looking to the writers' work, Trubek has—with humor, with self-deprecation, even with occasional anger and sadness—reminded us why we need literature in the first place."—Brock Clarke, author of *An Arsonist's Guide to Writers' Homes in New England*

"An antic and intelligent antitravel guide, *A Skeptic's Guide to Writer's Houses* explores places that have served as pilgrimage sites, tokens of local pride and color, and zones that confound the canons of literary and historical interpretation. With a gimlet eye and indefatigable curiosity, Anne Trubek peers through the veil of domestic veneration that surrounds canonized authors and neglected masters alike. In the course of her skeptical odyssey, she discerns the curious ways in which we turn authors into household gods."—Matthew Battles, author of *Library: An Unquiet History*

There are many ways to show our devotion to an author besides reading his or her works. Graves make for popular pilgrimage sites, but far more popular are writers' house museums. What is it we hope to accomplish by trekking to the home of a dead author? We may go in search of the point of inspiration, eager to stand on the very spot where our favorite literary characters first came to life—and find ourselves instead in the house where the author himself was conceived, or where she drew her last breath. Perhaps it is a place through which our writer passed only briefly, or maybe it really was a longtime home—now thoroughly remade as a decorator's show-house.

In *A Skeptic's Guide to Writers' Houses* Anne Trubek takes a vexed, often funny, and always thoughtful tour of a goodly number of house museums across the nation. Although admittedly skeptical about the stories these buildings tell us about their former inhabitants, she carries us along as she falls at least a little bit in love with each stop on her itinerary and finds in each some truth about literature, history, and contemporary America.

**Anne Trubek's** writing has appeared in numerous publications, including the *Christian Science Monitor*, *Mother Jones*, *American Prospect*, and Salon.com. She is Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Composition and English at Oberlin College.