

Animal Quintet:

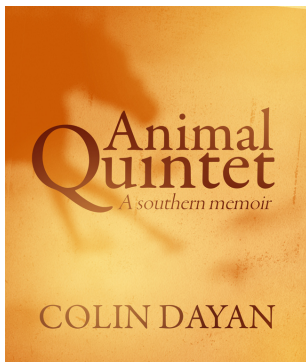
A Southern Memoir

"Colin Dayan brings a rare combination to her work: a strong mind and an expansive heart."

—Mark Edmundson, University of Virginia,
author of *Why Read?* and *The Death of Sigmund Freud*

In this haunting, lyrical, luminous book, Colin Dayan meditates on her family history, her relationship with animals, and her upbringing in the South. Examining memories, family documents, and photographs, *Animal Quintet* takes a raw look at racial tensions and bourgeois respectability in a region struggling to change. Famed Southern war horses ridden by Civil War generals, doomed Spanish fighting bulls, the misunderstood possum hunted by generations of Southerners, and the chickens slaughtered by family servants—these animals frame and inform a haunting picture of a doomed childhood in a riven society.

In these stories, Dayan asks readers to envision another political life, a reorientation of our ways of seeing and thinking, to examine our ethical and conceptual assumptions from the perspective of other creatures, to imagine an alternative way of being in the world, of thinking and loving. *Animal Quintet* is a coming-of-age story that depends on an unexpected attentiveness, on another kind of intelligibility beyond the world of the human.



PRAISE FOR ANIMAL QUINTET: A SOUTHERN MEMOIR

"Colin Dayan's *Animal Quintet* explores the complexity of race, class, gender and region with relation to animality and history."

— **Ashon Crawley**, Department of Religious Studies and African American Studies, University of North Carolina,
author of *Black Pentecostal Breath: The Aesthetics of Possibility*

"This memoir feels like a lucid dream dipped in magic realism. A mesmerizing tableau."

— **Bénédictte Boisseron**, Professor of Afroamerican and African Studies (DAAS), University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

"Colin Dayan's stories of mournful intimacy with animals bring the entanglement of our flesh and bodies to light, a light that seeps through her sweaty, lyrical, Southern memories."

— **Lori Gruen**, author of *Entangled Empathy*

"Dayan brings to a fore an enmeshment that tethers her grief and memories to animals that inhabit the south. She writes of how memory flows through the blood and circulates in interspecies relations."

— **Nicole R. Fleetwood**, Professor of American Studies and Art History, Rutgers University, New Brunswick

"We are mistaken to set ourselves above animals—our pets, our domesticated resources, our wild dangers, our prey—which we only understand in terms of our ability or failure to control or possess them."

— **Vincent Brown**, author of *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery*

"Through her evocative and lyrical writing Colin Dayan once again demonstrates the interconnections between the natural world and human life."

— **Gayle Pemberton**, Professor of English and African American Studies Emerita, Wesleyan University,
author of *The Hottest Water in Chicago: Notes of a Native Daughter*



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COLIN DAYAN spent her formative years in Atlanta before escaping to study in the Northeast. An expert on Poe and Melville, Haiti, and Caribbean literatures, she is the author of *Haiti, History, and the Gods*, *The Story of Cruel and Unusual*, and the award-winning *The Law is a White Dog*. She has written on prison rights, the legalities of torture, canine profiling, animal law, and the racial contours of US practices of punishment for *The Boston Review*, *The New York Times*, *The London Review of Books*, and Al Jazeera America, where she was a contributing editor. Now, with a sensibility marked by the South, she writes about race hatred and terror, dogs, humans, and other animals on a terrain scarred by her Southern past.