



TOM LUTZ

Author • Professor • Editor • Humanist • Gadabout

MEDIA KIT



www.TomLutzWriter.com

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Short Bio



Tom Lutz is a writer of books, articles, and screenplays, the founder of the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, and is now Distinguished Professor at UC Riverside. His books include American Book Award winner *Doing Nothing*, New York Times notable books *Crying* and *American Nervousness, 1903*, the travel books *And the Monkey Learned Nothing* and *Drinking Mare's Milk on the Roof of the World*, and coming soon, *Born Slippery: A Novel*.

He has written for television and film, and appeared in scores of national and international newspapers, magazines, academic journals, and edited collections. He is working with a Los Angeles-based production company on a television show set in the 1920s, is finishing a third collection of travel pieces, a book on the 1920s (*The Modern Surface*), and is in the early stages of a book on global conflict along the aridity line.

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Long Bio

Tom Lutz is an award-winning author of books, articles, reviews, screenplays, and radio programs. After a decade as a musician, cook, and carpenter, he began his formal education at a small college in the Midwest and went on to a PhD at Stanford University. He has taught at University of Iowa, Stanford, University of Copenhagen, and CalArts before joining the faculty at UC Riverside in 2006, where he is Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing.

Lutz is the author of *Doing Nothing: A History of Loafers, Loungers, Slackers and Bums* (Farrar Strauss Giroux; American Book Award, *NY Times* and *LA Times* Bestseller), *Cosmopolitan Vistas* (Cornell University Press; *Choice* Outstanding Academic Book), *Crying: The Natural and Cultural History of Tears* (Norton; *NY Times* Bestseller and *NY Times* Notable Book), *American Nervousness, 1903* (Cornell University Press; *NY Times* Notable Book), two books of travel narrative: *And the Monkey Learned Nothing: Dispatches from a Life in Transit* (Iowa University Press) and *Drinking Mare's Milk on the Roof of the World: Wandering the Globe from Azerbaijan to Zanzibar* (OR Books), and the forthcoming novel, *Born Slippy* (Repeater/Penguin Random House). He is the editor of *These 'Colored' United States: African American Essays from the 1920s* (Rutgers University Press). These books have been translated into 12 languages and published in dozens of countries. He has published in the *Black Music Research Journal*, *New York Times*, *LA Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *New Republic*, *Salon.com*, *ZYZZYVA*, *American Literary History*, *American Literature*, *Die Zeit*, *ASAP*, *Black Clock*, *Iowa Review*, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *New York Times Magazine*, *Santa Monica Review*, *Electric Literature*, *Hermano Cerdo*, *Belifenet*, *Connotation Press*, *LALA*, *Exquisite Corpse*, dozens of other literary and academic journals, and in many books from major university (Columbia, Oxford, NYU, Stanford, Cambridge) and trade presses.

He is finishing a third collection of travel pieces, and a book on the 1920s (*The Modern Surface*), and he is in the early stages of a book on the global conflict along the aridity line. He hosted and produced *The LARB Radio Hour* for two years and remains an executive producer on the show. His film work has included an adaptation of an Edith Wharton novel with Laurie Winer) for Curtis Hanson (*Custom of the Country*), a feature about the young Mark Twain (*Mark Twain Remembers*) for Crystal Springs Productions, a documentary on a

Long Bio Continued...

lost city in the Honduran jungle for Benenson Productions, a thriller (with Laurie Winer, *Playing Dead*) for Meg Ryan's Prufrock Pictures, a documentary on Los Angeles literature (*LA Lit*) for KO Pictures, and a historical drama (with Laurie Winer, *Jonestown*) for producers Trevor Macy and Cari-Esta Albert. He is working on a historical drama series pilot and bible, set in the 1920s, for a Los Angeles production company.

Lutz is founding Editor in Chief and Publisher of *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, which has grown over seven years from a basement-office dream to a million-dollar nonprofit business and one of the handful most important book reviews in the world. At *Los Angeles Review of Books*, he has produced over 60 e-books, 30 print magazines, 100 hours of short film and 150 hours of radio and podcasts (with guests Salman Rushdie, Kareem Abdul Jabbar, Matthew Weiner, Walter Mosley, Norman Lear, Sandra Tsing Loh, Terry McMillan, Frank Gehry, Jonathan Gold, James Ellroy, Sam Harris, Eric Bogosian, Michael Tolkin, Nikki Giovanni, TC Boyle, and many others), and over 3000 daily editions of *Los Angeles Review of Books*, featuring over 7,500 longform pieces of literary journalism. He has just launched LARB Books, which has its first ten titles in production, three of them classic texts written in Los Angeles in the 1920s, one by a Mexican newspaper man, and two Hollywood novels, one by screenwriter Harry Leon Wilson, and one by Edgar Rice Burroughs of Tarzan fame. Other titles include books by Yxta Maya Murray, Henry Giroux, Brad Evans, and Colin Dayan.

Lutz has served as chair of the department at UCR, director of MFA programs and other graduate programs, and has directed UCR's Writers Week for the last five years. He created and directed both the low-residency MFA program at UCR Palm Desert and the LARB-USC Publishing Workshop.

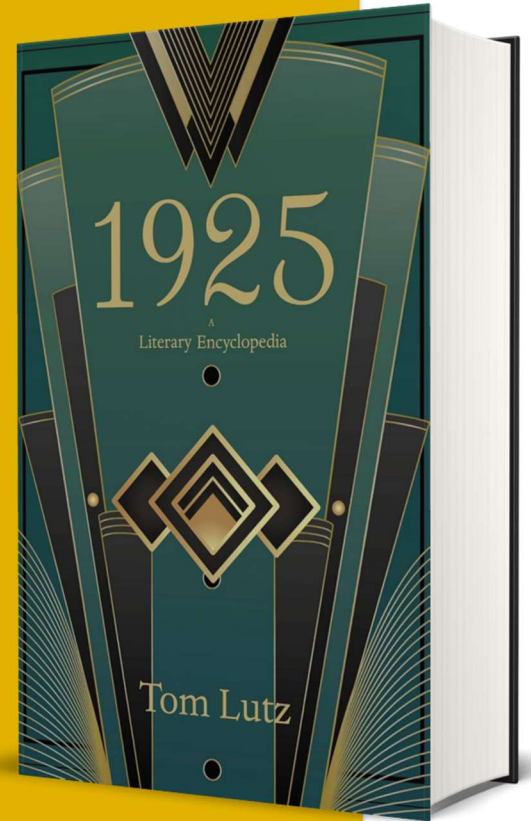
He has appeared as an expert and author on ABC, CBS, PBS, and NPR, on television and radio in a dozen other countries, and he has given talks, readings, and seminars at hundreds of universities, conferences, and bookstores here and abroad.

Current Book

2025

The year 1925 was arguably the peak of literature's centrality. There were more magazines, more journals, more reviews, more book news, and more book gossip than ever before or since. Literature's rivals for cultural attention were on the rise—film was becoming a more significant part of people's media diet, radio was just taking off, television technologies were advancing—but literature was still king. Even mediocre books got dozens of reviews, and the reviews were (most often) thoughtful and intellectually engaged. The belief that literary writing was an essential and consequential business was nearly universal. Modernist ferment continued to excite discussion while the pulp revolution in genre fiction—detective stories, science fiction, Westerns, romance—was booming. These popular books, even if sometimes condescended to, were also given thoughtful review attention.

This encyclopedia was written as we approached the 100th anniversary of the annus mirabilis. In what follows, we can see the seeds of virtually every aspect of our cultural life, from art, literature, theater, and music to physics, philosophy, social science, and political discourse. The fear of environmental degradation, the corruption in our politics, the competing claims of utopianism and dystopia, the bitterly divided views on science, mass media, art, nature, justice, generations, community, freedom, sexuality, race, immigration—all can be seen in their budding or full-blown gore and glory in 1925. We have come far and not very far at all.



Publisher: Rare Bird Lit

Publication date: 2025

Genre: American Studies, Cultural History, History & Criticism, Literary History & Criticism, Philosophy

Price: Hardcover - \$45.00

ISBN: 9781644284841

No. of pages: 748

What others are saying about Tom...

“Move over Pico Iyer: Tom Lutz has returned to town with an irresistible book of true stories about accidental intimacies in unexpected places. His encounters on the road, described in gorgeous prose, are brief but intense. Lighting out for the territories has never seemed so enthralling.”

—Jon Wiener (*on Lutz's Drinking Mare's Milk on the Roof of the World*)

“Highly intelligent, stimulatingly eclectic, and impressively learned.”

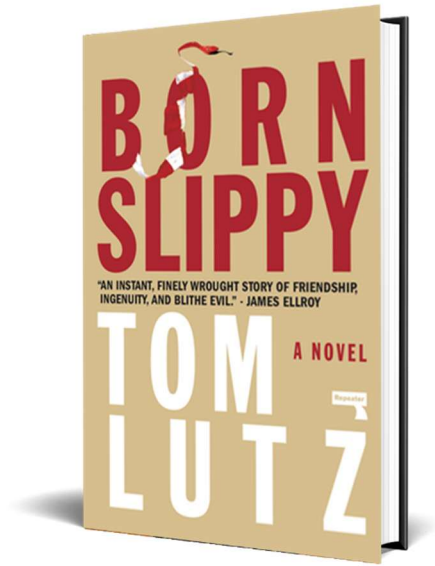
—Salon (*on Lutz's Doing Nothing*)

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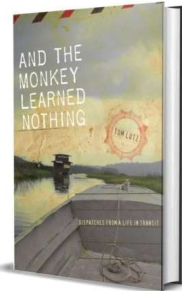
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Suggested Questions

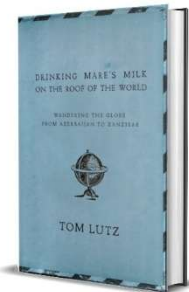
1. What drew you to focus an entire literary encyclopedia on the year 1925? What makes that year so uniquely pivotal in your view?
2. How did you manage the scope of such a wide-ranging project?
3. You describe 1925 as literature's "peak of centrality." What were the cultural forces at play that made literature the dominant medium at that time?
4. How did the rise of rival media like film, radio, and television begin to shift the cultural landscape?
5. One fascinating element in your book is the way you weave genre fiction—detective stories, sci-fi, Westerns—into the broader literary conversation. Why was it important to give pulp fiction its due?
6. The encyclopedia explores themes that resonate deeply with today's world. How do you see 1925 as a mirror for 2025?
7. What were some of the most surprising or lesser-known discoveries you made while researching this period? Any forgotten figures or hidden gems you'd like readers to know about?
8. As the founder of the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, you've spent years shaping how literature is discussed in the public sphere. How do you think the literary criticism of the 1920s compares with today's?
9. What do you hope readers take away from revisiting this rich cultural moment?
10. If you could bring one figure from 1925 into today's literary or cultural world, who would it be, and what do you think they'd make of our current moment?



Author Name: Tom Lutz
Book Title: Born Slippy
Publisher Name: Repeater Books/Penguin Random House
Publication date: 2020
ISBN: 9781912248643
No. of Pages: 310 pages



Author Name: Tom Lutz
Book Title: And the Monkey Learned Nothing: Dispatches from a Life in Transit
Publisher Name: University Of Iowa Press; Sightline Books
Publication Year: 2016
ISBN: 1609384490
No. of Pages: 241 pages

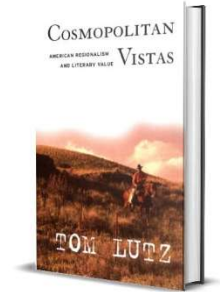


Author Name: Tom Lutz
Book Title: Drinking Mare's Milk on the Roof of the World: Wandering the Globe from Azerbaijan to Zanzibar
Publisher Name: OR Books
Publication Year: 2016
ISBN: 9781682190562
No. of Pages: 236 pages

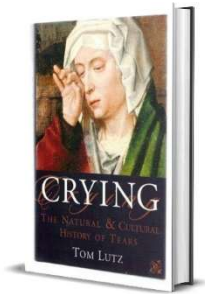
Published Works



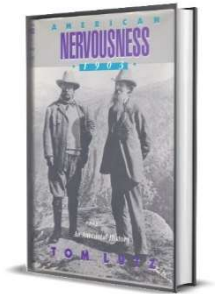
Author Name: Tom Lutz
Book Title: Doing Nothing: A History of Loafers, Loungers, Slackers, and Bums in America
Publisher Name: Farrar, Straus and Giroux
Publication Year: 2006
ISBN: 0865476500
No. of Pages: 388 pages



Author Name: Tom Lutz
Book Title: Cosmopolitan Vistas: American Regionalism and Literary Value
Publisher Name: Cornell University Press
Publication Year: 2004
ISBN: 9780801489235
No. of Pages: 240 pages



Author Name: Tom Lutz
Book Title: Crying: The Natural and Cultural History of Tears
Publisher Name: W W Norton & Co Inc
Publication Year: 1999
ISBN: 9780393047561
No. of Pages: 352 pages



Author Name: Tom Lutz
Book Title: American Nervousness, 1903: An Anecdotal History
Publisher Name: Cornell University Press
Publication Year: 1993
ISBN: 9780801499012
No. of Pages: 329 pages

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