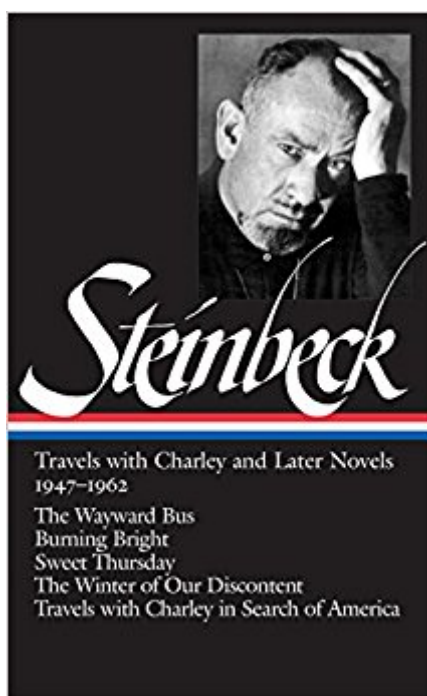


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# John Steinbeck: Travels With Charley And Later Novels 1947-1962: The Wayward Bus / Burning Bright / Sweet Thursday / The Winter Of Our Discontent (Library Of America)



## Synopsis

John Steinbeck was never content to repeat himself, and his restless search for new forms and fresh subject matter is fully evident in the books of his later years. This volume collects four novels that exhibit the full range of his gift, along with a travel book that has become one of his most enduringly popular works. In *The Wayward Bus* (1947), Steinbeck leads a group of ill-matched passengers representing a spectrum of social types and classes, stranded by a washed-out bridge, on a circuitous journey that exposes cruelties, self-deceptions, and unsuspected moral strengths. The tone ranges from boisterous comedy to trenchant satirical observation of postwar America. *Burning Bright* (1950), an allegory set against shifting backgrounds (circus, sea, farm) and revolving around the fear of sterility and the desire for self-perpetuation, marks Steinbeck's involvement with the drama in its fusion of the forms of novel and play. *Sweet Thursday* (1954) marks Steinbeck's return, in a mood of sometimes frothy comedy, to the characters and milieu of his earlier *Cannery Row*. A love story set against the background of the local brothel, the Bear Flag, *Sweet Thursday* is for all its intimations of melancholy one of the most lighthearted of Steinbeck's books. It was subsequently adapted by Rodgers and Hammerstein into their musical *Pipe Dream*. Steinbeck's final novel, *The Winter of Our Discontent* (1961) is set in an old Long Island whaling town modeled on Sag Harbor, where he had been spending time since 1953. The book breaks new ground in its depiction of the crass commercialism of contemporary America, and its impact on a protagonist with traditionalist values who is appalled but finally tempted by the encroaching sleaziness. *Travels with Charley in Search of America* (1962) was Steinbeck's last published book. A record of his experiences and observations as he drove around America in a pickup truck, accompanied by his standard poodle Charley, it is filled with engaging, often humorous description and comes to a powerful climax in an encounter with racist demonstrators in New Orleans. Robert DeMott, co-editor, is the Edwin and Ruth Kennedy Distinguished Professor at Ohio University and the author of Steinbeck's *Typewriter*, an award-winning book of critical essays. Brian Railsback, co-editor, is dean of the Honors College at Western Carolina University and the author of *Parallel Expeditions: Charles Darwin and the Art of John Steinbeck*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The Library of America editions are a nice size with quality paper and bindings, and are an economical way to own multiple hardbound books from your favorite authors. I took a Continuing Studies course on the works of John Steinbeck at Stanford University a few years ago and the professor recommended these book collections. I have read "Travels with Charley" over and over, and even saw Rocinante at the Steinbeck Museum in Salinas, CA. This collection also includes the very poignant "The Winter of Our Discontent". If you're a Steinbeck fan, you already know that many of his books are worth reading over and over, and the Library of America bound volumes will have a prominent place on your bookshelves.

For my older eyes it would have been ideal if the print size and inside margins were slightly larger. Well worth the price and I greatly appreciate that it was made in the USA. I wish that would always clearly display country of manufacture.

This volume is up to the LOA's customary magnificent standards. This is not Steinbeck's best work (although I persist in viewing "Sweet Thursday" as under-valued), but still worth every penny. Steinbeck fans should have this on their shelves. DeMott's previous editorial work on *The Grapes of Wrath* establishes him as the editor of choice for any edition, and these Library of America editions are becoming, justifiably, the "standard" texts.

This edition has many of his best stories. Steinbeck can tell a story like no one else! This is quality binding and paper. It's lightweight so I can hold it easily while reading in bed.

You can't go wrong with a story by Steinbeck or an order from . Both are great.

I'd read Charlie as a youth and wanted to reread it 50 years later. Naturally, it's much better now because I've matured enough to understand it. I've always liked Steinbeck because of how he makes me feel. This road trip story is more light-hearted than other of his work, and there are insights he sneaks in disguised with humor. The pleasant surprise is the other 4 novels included, none of which I've read before. I always feel rich when I have a good supply of unread books on hand that I know I'll like. Kind of like reading book 1 of a trilogy, that you really like, and looking forward to the others. The publisher, Library of America, is one of my favorites because of quality paper and binding as well as quality writing. These are books I'll pass down to grandchildren, both for content and medium. I typically buy used hardcovers from the online booksellers, or download to my Kindle free from the library or . Sometimes it turns out to be less expensive to buy new books, like this one that includes 5 novels in 1 book.

I just got my second standard poodle and bought this to read Travels with Charley. There are other books in this collection that I will also enjoy reading. I am a big fan of John Steinbeck.

Library of America reports that there are plans for a fifth volume of Steinbeck writings, but precise contents and a publication date have not yet been set.

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