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In his introduction, David Foster Wallace makes the spirited case that "many of these essays are valuable simply as exhibits of what a first-rate artistic mind can make of particular fact-sets -- whether these involve the 17-kHz ring tones of some kids' cell phones, the language of movement as parsed by dogs, the near-infinity of ways to experience and describe an earthquake, the existential synecdoche of stagefright, or the revelation that most of what you've believed and revered turns out to be self-indulgent crap."



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