

## **WESTERNS**

We all know the stereotypes associated with Westerns: cowboys, lawmen, and Native Americans; mountains, deserts, and prairies; gunfights, wagon trains, and cattle raids. Though all these things are present, they frame larger themes which are common to great literature: humankind vs. nature, the individual vs. society, and the clash of cultures. The images and stories in Westerns are an integral part of the American mythos, and are recognized around the world as quintessentially American symbols. The Western genre covers a vast range of material. The following list of authors covers classic portraits of the West like those of *Louis L'Amour* and *Zane Grey* to more contemporary visions such as that of *Cormac McCarthy* and *Annie Proulx*.

**CLASSIC AUTHORS - These authors created the images we see when we hear the word "Western":**

Blevins, Winfred	Haycox, Ernest
Brand, Max	Henry, Will
Cather, Willa	Hough, Emerson
Clark, Walter Van Tilberg	Johnson, Dorothy M.
Cooper, James Fenimore	Kelton, Elmer
Eastlake, William	L'Amour, Louis
Fisher, Vardis	Le May, Alan
Grey, Zane	Mulford, Clarence E.
Guthrie, A.B. (Alfred Bentram)	Schaefer, Jack
Harte, Bret	Wister, Owen

**CONTEMPORARY AUTHORS - Some of these authors have continued the traditions of the past; while others offer alternative point of view, i.e. women of the West, Native Americans, or tell stories in a contemporary setting in which the myth of the West is an integral theme:**

Blake, Michael	Johnston, Terry C.
Boggs, Johnny D.	Johnstone, William W.
Braun, Matthew	Kingsolver, Barbara
Champlin, Tim	Leonard, Elmore (early work)
Chiaventone, Frederick J.	McCarthy, Cormac (later work)
Conley, Robert J.	McMurtry, Larry
Doig, Ivan	Proulx, Annie
Estleman, Loren D.	Stegner, Wallace Earle
Evans, Max	Wheeler, Richard S.
Hillerman, Tony	

Award winners are always a good bet for a quality read. Here are some current Western award winners:

**Western Heritage Award for Outstanding Western Novel** sponsored by the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City, OK:

2007 - Geoffrion, Alan. *Broken Trail*  
2006 - Agonito, Rosemary & Joseph Agonito. *Buffalo Calf Road Woman*  
2005 - Eickhoff, Randy Lee. *And Not to Yield*  
2004 - Boggs, Johnny D. *Spark on the Prairie*  
2003 - Chiaventone, Frederick J. *Moon of Bitter Cold*  
2002 - Estleman, Loren D. *The Master Executioner*  
2001 - Harrigan, Stephen. *Gates of the Alamo*  
2000 - O'Brien, Dan. *The Contract Surgeon*  
1999 - Estleman, Loren D. *Journey of the Dead*  
1998 - Askew, Rilla. *The Mercy Seat*  
1997 - Lehrer, Kate. *Out of Eden*  
1996 - Kirkpatrick, Jane. *A Sweetness to the Soul*  
1995 - Evans, Max. *Bluefeather Fellini in the Sacred Realm*  
1994 - Kingsolver, Barbara. *Pigs in Heaven*  
1993 - McCarthy, Cormac. *All the Pretty Horses*  
1992 - Freeman, Judith. *Set for Life*

**Spur Awards** have been given annually since 1953 for distinguished writing about the American West by the Western Writers of America. Today, there are many categories of **Spur Awards**. The following are recent winners for best long form novel:

2007 - Crook, Elizabeth. *The Night Journal*  
2006 - Wyman, Willard. *High Country*  
2005 - Gear, Kathleen O'Neal. *People of the Raven*  
2004 - Blevins, Winfred. *So Wild a Dream*  
2003 - Earling, Debra Magpie. *Perma Red*  
2002 - Udall, Brady. *The Miracle Life of Edgar Mint*  
2001 - Harrigan, Stephen. *The Gates of the Alamo*  
2000 - Recknor, Ellen. *Prophet Annie*  
1999 - Smiley, Jane. *The All-True Travels and Adventures of Lidie Newton*  
1998 - McMurtry, Larry. *Comanche Moon*  
1997 - Wheeler, Richard S. *Sierra*  
1996 - Blevins, Winfred. *Stone Song*  
1995 - Kelton, Elmer. *The Far Canyon*  
1994 - Long, Jeff. *Empire of Bones*  
1993 - Kelton, Elmer. *Slaughter*  
1992 - Sherman, Jory. *The Medicine Horn*

None of these lists are comprehensive. If you need more recommendations, ask a librarian. WE LOVE TO HELP!

*Compiled by the staff of the NPL, 2007*