



# The Traveling Companion & Other Plays (New Directions Paperbook)

*Tennessee Williams*

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Tennessee Williams

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**Twelve previously uncollected experimental shorter plays: *The Chalky White Substance* • *The Day on Which a Man Dies (An Occidental Noh Play)* • *A Cavalier for Milady* • *The Pronoun "I"* • *The Remarkable Rooming House of Mme. LeMonde* • *Kirche, Küche, Kinder (An Outrage for the Stage)* • *Green Eyes* • *The Parade* • *The One Exception* • *Sunburst* • *Will Mr. Merriwether Return from Memphis?* • *The Traveling Companion***

Even with his great commercial success, Tennessee Williams always considered himself an experimental playwright. In the last 25 years of his life his explorations increased—especially in shorter forms and one-act plays—as Williams created performance pieces with elements of theater of the absurd, theater of cruelty, theater of the ridiculous, as well as motifs from Japanese forms such as Noh and Kabuki, high camp and satire, and with innovative visual and verbal styles that were entirely his own. Influenced by Beckett, Genet, and Pinter, among others, Williams worked hard to expand the boundaries of the lyric realism he was best known for. These plays were explicitly intended to be performed off-off Broadway or regionally. Sometimes disturbing, sometimes outrageous, quite often the tone of these plays is rough, bawdy or even cartoonish. While a number of these plays employ what could be termed bizarre "happy endings," others gaze unblinkingly into the darkness. Though several of Williams' lesser-known works from this period have already been published by New Directions, these twelve plays have never been collected. Most of these shorter plays are unknown to audiences and scholars—some are published here for the first time—yet all of them embrace, in one way or another, what *Time* magazine called "the four major concerns that have spurred Williams' dramatic imagination: loneliness, love, the violated heart and the valiancy of survival."

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