



**Dos Passos: Novels 1920-1925: One Man's  
Initiation: 1917, Three Soldiers, Manhattan  
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*John Dos Passos*

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Before he began the U.S.A. trilogy, John Dos Passos prefigured his groundbreaking epic through three novels that provide a fascinating glimpse into his stunning achievement as an avant-garde prose stylist while they incisively chronicle early twentieth century Europe and America. *Manhattan Transfer* (1925), a kaleidoscopic portrait of New York City, is universally acknowledged as a modernist masterpiece. This lyrical, exuberantly experimental novel orchestrates the rising and falling fortunes of more than a dozen characters: Wall Street speculators, theatrical celebrities, impoverished immigrants, bootleggers, and anarchist rebels move through a maze of tenements and skyscrapers. The impressionistic *One Man's Initiation: 1917* (1920) draws upon Dos Passos' experiences driving ambulances in France to portray the fear, uncertainty, and camaraderie of war. This Library of America edition includes passages censored by the book's original publisher. *Three Soldiers* (1921), here with the author's own introduction, delves deeply into the spiritual toll of war, dramatizing American servicemen fighting in battle, struggling against dehumanizing military regimentation, and experiencing the chaotic pleasures of Paris.

Along with its companion volumes *Travel Books and Other Writings* (see opposite page) and U.S.A. (Library of America, 1996), *Novels 1920-1925* enriches our understanding of Dos Passos as a writer, thinker, and witness to history.

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