

## SARAH SMARSH

*“Smarsh, as a writer, is Authentic with a capital A...”* —George Hodgman

**Sarah Smarsh is an author, speaker, and journalist who focuses on socioeconomic class and rural America. Her book *Heartland: A Memoir of Working Hard and Being Broke in the Richest Country on Earth*, an instant *New York Times* bestseller and a finalist for the National Book Award, examines economic inequality through her upbringing among the working poor on a Kansas farm.**

Sarah has reported on socioeconomic class for *The Guardian*, the *New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Harper's*, and many other publications. *Heartland* was named a “best of 2018” by NPR, Fresh Air, the *Boston Globe*, Amazon, BuzzFeed, Barnes and Noble, and *Publishers Weekly*. In addition to being short-listed for the National Book Award, *Heartland* was a finalist for the Kirkus Prize, the Lukas Prize, the Indie Choice Award, and an Audie Award for Smarsh’s reading of audiobook. Actor-producer Sarah Jessica Parker selected the title for the American Library Association’s Book Club Central. Her latest work, *She Come By It Natural: Dolly Parton and the Women Who Lived Her Songs*, was named a must-read book of 2020 by *Time Magazine*.

Sarah is a regular political commentator in national media and has spoken internationally on poverty, rural issues, and cultural divides at venues ranging from small-town libraries to Sydney Opera House. Sarah was recently a Fellow at Harvard’s Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy. In 2019, Sarah released a podcast entitled *The Homecomers*, which focuses on how a national blind spot toward rural and working-class America is driving misleading headlines, broken politics, and dangerous fissures in our social fabric. The podcast showcases stories of people who, as residents or advocates, remain committed to their complex, embattled homes.

By ninth grade, Sarah attended eight southern-Kansas schools, ranging from a 2,000-student high school to a two-room prairie schoolhouse. Now, she holds an MFA in nonfiction writing from Columbia University, as well as degrees in journalism and English from the University of Kansas. A former English professor and grant-writer for social service agencies, Sarah aims for all of her work to have a backbone of civic responsibility.