

SARAH SMARSH

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

Sarah Smarsh is a journalist who has reported for the *New York Times*, *Harper’s*, the *Guardian*, and many other publications. A former English professor and grant-writer for social service agencies, Sarah aims for all her work to have a backbone of civic responsibility.

Her first book, *Heartland: A Memoir of Working Hard and Being Broke in the Richest Country on Earth*, was an instant *New York Times* bestseller, a finalist for the National Book Award and the Kirkus Prize, the winner of the Chicago Tribune Literary Prize, and a best-books-of-the-year selection by President Barack Obama. Her 2020 book *She Come By It Natural: Dolly Parton and the Women Who Lived Her Songs* was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award and was named a must-read book 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. A former writing professor, Sarah has served as a Shorenstein Fellow at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government and a Pritzker Fellow at the University of Chicago Institute of Politics. 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.

Sarah’s most recent book, *Bone of the Bone: Essays on America from a Daughter of the Working Class, 2012-2024*, was called a “must-read” by the *San Francisco Chronicle*. She is also at work on a book about the endangered tallgrass prairie ecosystem, which will be published by Scribner in 2026. She lives in rural Kansas.