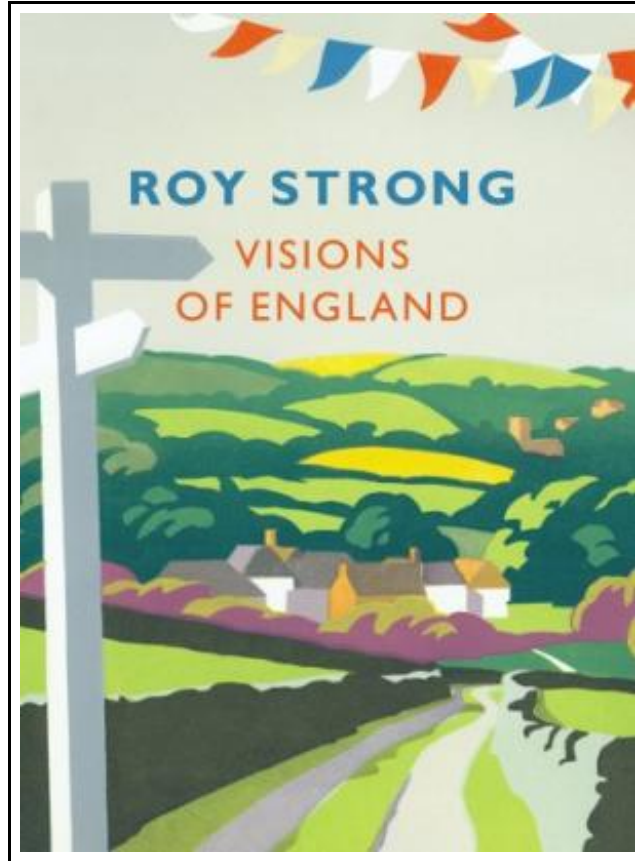


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Vintage Publishing, United Kingdom, 2011. Hardback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. What does it mean to be English? For centuries, Englishness was synonymous with Britishness, informed first by the political dominance of the English monarchs over the British Isles - reaching its apogee in the rule of Elizabeth I - and later by the island's imperial might and expansion. But alongside that tradition, reaching back to medieval times, there has also been a vision of England as the rural arcadia celebrated by painters and poets. While the mythology of empire lingers on in the national psyche, Roy Strong argues that it is the rural tradition - combining aestheticism, pastoralism and patriotism - that offers an answer to the present crisis of English identity. National identity essentially resides in the mind: evolving over time it is inevitably selective in how it epitomizes the ideals and aspirations of a people. In this searching and deeply passionate book, Roy Strong reveals an iconography of England rooted in the cultural imagination. Rather than simply depicting reality, art and literature have often ennobled - and immortalised - reality in a way that has directly affected how we see ourselves. Today we view Suffolk through the eyes of Constable, the Lake District comes to life in the poetry of Wordsworth, and the country house seems to emerge from the novels of Evelyn Waugh. Free from nationalism, chauvinism and political bias, Roy Strong offers a vision of England that is inclusive and relevant for everybody living in the country today - an appreciation of the beauty of the English countryside, a love of nature and gardening, and a celebration of the dramas of Shakespeare, the paintings of Turner and the music of Elgar.



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