

CONTENTS

Introduction 1

PART I. FLORIDA MEN AND FLORIDA WOMEN

1. Working for Scale 7
2. A Florida Love Story (with Tattoos) 11
3. Of Nudists and Their Packages 13
4. Panacea amid a Pandemic 15
5. The Ketchup Murder 18
6. The House of Turtles 25
7. The Ballad of Alligator Ron 29
8. Oh, Snapp! 33
9. Gambling on Nature 37
10. Thankful for the Turkey Lady 40
11. One Foot in Front of the Other 43
12. Elvis and the Florida Man 48

PART II. CRIME DOES NOT PAY (ENOUGH)

13. “The Phoniest Sumbitch That Walks” 53
14. Encyclopedia Brown and the Case of the Mysterious Author 59
15. Mug Shots 65
16. “An Alias Name” 68
17. The Bard of Boca Raton 74
18. Unintelligible at Any Speed 82
19. Mission of a Lifetime 86
20. Double Trouble 91
21. “The Morning from Hell” 96
22. Bradys on a Train 104

- 23. Killing Time on Death Row 106
- 24. A Flash of Green 115
- 25. Fifty-Five Seconds 120
- 26. The Wonderful World of Willeford 129

PART III. WILD, WILD LIFE

- 27. The Fastest Gopher in Florida 141
- 28. A Nasty Bathroom Surprise 143
- 29. Swamp Thing 147
- 30. Cukes for Couples 151
- 31. Monkeys Amok 154
- 32. We're Going on a Bear Hunt 157
- 33. Loved to Death 161
- 34. Where the Buffalo Roam 168
- 35. Last Look 171
- 36. Cat Fight in the Lap of Luxury 174
- 37. So Long, Snooty 179
- 38. Snakes Alive! 183

PART IV. THE STATE YOU'RE IN

- 39. Don't Okahumpka My Wewahitchka! 193
- 40. Farewell to Some Classic Florida Kitsch 195
- 41. Haunted Highway 198
- 42. Statues We'd Salute 200
- 43. The Bridge to Nowhere 203
- 44. The Last Bookstore 207
- 45. Let Us Now Praise Florida Lovebugs 210
- 46. Dying Every Night at the Rodeo 213
- 47. Hurricane Central 223
- 48. Andrew, Plus 10 226
- 49. Springs of Love 233
- 50. My Florida Bucket List 237
- 51. Uncle Carlyle Knew the Way 240

Acknowledgments 243