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Sommario/riassunto	No nation in modern history has had a more powerful sense of its own distinctiveness than the United States. Yet few Americans understand the immensely varied sources of that sense and the fascinating debates that have always swirled around our attempts to define "America" with greater precision. All too many have come to regard the study of their national history as tedious, just as they fail to embrace the past as something in which they must be consciously grounded. In this introduction to the study of American history, Wilfred M. McClay invites us to experience the perennial freshness and