



Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir (Writer's Craft)

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First published in 1987, *Inventing the Truth* quickly grew into the best-selling compendium of the *Writer's Craft* series and continues to be a lasting hit. In this revised and expanded edition with a new introduction by its editor, William Zinsser, the voices of original contributors - Russell Baker, Annie Dillard, Alfred Kazin, and Toni Morrison - join with new pieces by Jill Ker Conway, Eileen Simpson, and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., among others. The result is a provocative dialogue that vividly examines the expanding and innovative approaches to a literary form practiced by some of our most prestigious authors. With refreshing candor, contributors both old and new address the pleasures and challenges of accurately rendering their personal histories. Toni Morrison underscores the manner in which her heritage informs her work, while Jill Ker Conway describes the essential act of leaving the past behind. On a comic note, Russell Baker recalls his failure to include his mother and himself i

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Every time *Inventing the Truth* appears in a new edition, editor William Zinsser can't help but add to it. The first edition (1987) evolved from a series of New York Public Library talks, for which the mandate was not to lecture about the genre of the memoir but to explain how a specific memoir came to be written. In the book's 1995 edition, Russell Baker, Annie Dillard, Alfred Kazin, and Toni Morrison were joined by Jill Ker Conway, Eileen Simpson, Henry Louis Gates Jr., and Ian Frazier. This time around, Zinsser has added a rich and charming reminiscence by Frank McCourt (*Angela's Ashes*).

The authors do stick to their assignment: Russell Baker credits his huge family with helping him "learn a lot about humanity from close-up observation"; Jill Ker Conway talks about her desire to write a female memoir that was not a romantic happily-ever-after; and Henry Louis Gates Jr. discusses "want[ing] to write a book that imitated the specialness of black culture when no white people are around." But there is also plenty of advice for writers here, and some general thoughts about the genre. Conway addresses the difficulty of "going back as a historian" and trying to understand "all the things you took as a given when you were a child." Gates warns us to "be prepared for the revelation of things you don't even dream are going to come up." And Annie Dillard contemplates the strangeness of spending "more time writing about [a scene or an event] than you did living it." --*Jane Steinberg*

From Publishers Weekly

Russell Baker, in writing his memoirs, left out a principal characterhis motherin the first draft. After much torment, he realized that "although nobody's life makes any sense . . . you might as well make it into a story." The six essays in this symposium explore the craft of memoir, defined here as a portion of a life, narrower in scope than autobiography. Annie Dillard argues that the best memoirs forge their own forms. Toni Morrison describes how slave narratives have influenced her work. New York's streets gave Alfred Kazin "physical images, straight from the belly," which he shaped into his self-portrait, *A Walker in the City*. Lewis Thomas weaves reflections on human adaptability, memory and evolution. In his introductory essay, Zinsser discusses why a good memoir is also a work of history, capturing a distinctive moment in the life of a society.

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From Library Journal

Five writers discuss the art of memoir in talks given at the New York Public Library. Each focuses on a corner of life, but one revealing both the person and the world that shaped him or her. Annie Dillard talks of her Pittsburgh childhood and her moment of waking to the world outside. Russell Baker explains why his first draft of *Growing Up* was so bad that he had to start over again. Alfred Kazin finds that writing about his Brooklyn childhood connected him with the great tradition of Emerson and Whitman. Toni Morrison tells why her fiction uses not only family history but the slave narratives of her people. Lewis Thomas traces the evolution of his singular self from primeval bacteria to contemporary scientist whose drive to be useful is the most fundamental of all biological necessities. A delightful and instructive book. Milton Meltzer, New York

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Julie Flanagan:

This *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir (Writer's Craft)* book is absolutely not ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you have by reading this book is actually information inside this e-book incredible fresh, you will get facts which is getting deeper anyone read a lot of information you will get. That *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir (Writer's Craft)* without we know teach the one who studying it become critical in contemplating and analyzing. Don't always be worry *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir (Writer's Craft)* can bring once you are and not make your handbag space or bookshelves' grow to be full because you can have it inside your lovely laptop even mobile phone. This *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir (Writer's Craft)* having great arrangement in word and layout, so you will not truly feel uninterested in reading.

Lorraine Prinz:

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