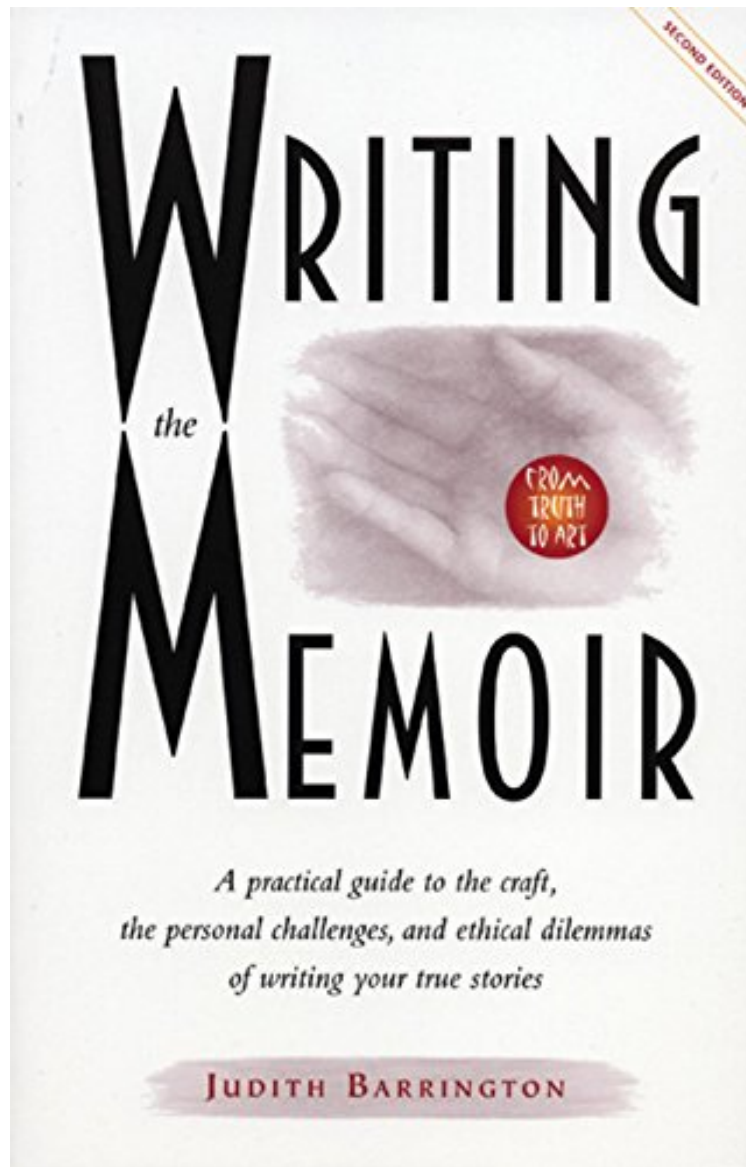


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## Writing the Memoir: From Truth to Art, Second Edit

Judith Barrington

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**Judith Barrington : Writing the Memoir: From Truth to Art, Second Edit** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Writing the Memoir: From Truth to Art, Second Edit:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Really Specialzed Interesting But Not For EveryoneBy thirttwinMight inspire you if you're set on putting the most major and memorable events of your own life to paper- if that idea doesn't interest you or you don't feel you have the discipline to stare at a blank page often you can give this

book a pass.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Purchased as a textbookBy Prescott JNRPurchased this as a textbook for a writing class this coming fall semester. Have read through it once. Will now go through and work on the exercises which follow each chapter.The author discusses the various elements of memoir writing and refers the reader to numerous published memoirs that illustrate the concepts involved in memoir writing.From reading the text. writing a memoir sounds like a scary and daunting project. But I am sure the instructor will introduce us to it gradually. Hopefully it will be painless.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Good for the Beginner, Good for the Seasoned WriterBy Marie-Jo FortisI got this book because I am presently writing a memoir -or memoirs- and I felt I needed some guidance. Or at least reassurance. This, Barrington provides with a lot of clarity without being overly didactic. Legal issues --if not about writing techniques, certainly useful here-- are addressed in the last pages. Although the volume seems to be targeted toward beginning memoir writers, its sections on finding one's own voice, tense choice, selection of memories, as well as the exercises that come at the end of each chapter can also jumpstart the more seasoned authors. Writing is an ever-learning experience. You occasionally need to be reminded of what you already know. Not only can this solidify your own art, but it can deepen it as well. Memoirist Judy Barrington has created here a practical how-to with a writing that flows and never gets boring. And the fact that she provides generous excerpts and excellent references of beautiful memoirs is, in my opinion, a lovely gift that provides additional inspiration to any author writing in that genre.

Since *Writing the Memoir* came out in early 1997 it has sold roughly 80,000 copies and is consistently praised as "the best book on memoir out there." It is thought-provoking, explanatory, and practical: each chapter ends with writing exercises. It covers everything from questions of truth and ethics to questions of craft and the crucial retrospective voice. An appendix provides information on legal issues.Judith Barrington, an award-winning memoir writer and acclaimed writing teacher, is attuned to the forces, both external and internal, that work to stop a writer; her tone is respectful of the difficulties and encouraging of taking risks. Her nimble prose, her deep belief in the importance of this genre, and her delight in the rich array of memoirists writing today make this book more than the typical "how-to" creative writing book. In this second edition the author has added new material and reflects on issues raised since *Writing the Memoir* was written, early in the memoir boom."No student of memoir writing could fail to learn from this wise, pragmatic, and confiding book. One hears on every page the voice of an intelligent and responsive teacher, with years of thinking about memoir behind her."Vivian GornickJudith Barrington is the author of *Lifesaving: A Memoir* and numerous individual memoirs which have been published in literary magazines and anthologies. She is the author of three volumes of poetry: *Trying to Be an Honest Woman*, *History and Geography*, and *Horses and the Human Soul* (forthcoming in 2002). She has taught creative writing for the past twenty years.

From *Library Journal*Seems like everyone wants to write his or her own memoirs these days. Memoirist and creative writing teacher Barrington (*An Intimate Wilderness: Lesbian Writers on Sexuality*, LJ 10/1/91) tells us how to do it. Her practical guide leads both experienced and novice writers through the writing process from idea to publication, addressing such technical problems as theme selection, voice, tone, form, plot, scene, and character development, as well as how to stimulate creative thinking and build necessary discipline. Barrington draws on the writings of Alice Walker, Kathleen Norris, Annie Dillard, Frank Conroy, and Virginia Woolf to illustrate her techniques. Her common-sense approach strives to temper the emotional honesty of the genre with the integrity of artistic skill. Libraries supporting a writers' group (for which Barrington includes a do's-and-don'ts section) will want several copies. Academic and school libraries might want it to supplement creative writing curriculums.?Denise S. Sticha, Seton Hill Coll. Lib., Greensburg, Pa.Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.From *Booklist*The current renaissance in literary memoirs pleases readers and inspires writers, while raising a number of questions about this most fluid and open-ended of genres. Barrington recognizes and addresses both the memoir's great appeal and the issues it raises pertaining to voice, structure, the transformation of fact into truth, and the elevation of personal experience and revelation into art. Like many fellow contemporary memoirists, Barrington is a poet who found herself "needing the expansiveness of prose," but as soon as she began writing her memoir, she realized how challenging a form it is and how unsettling the act of writing about one's life so openly, without the artifice of poetry or the mask of fiction, can be. After asking the key question, "What were the rules of memoir anyway?" she ended up answering it with this intelligent and insightful book, which combines stimulating literary analysis with a great deal of practical information and excellent advice. Donna SeamanAbout the AuthorJudith Barrington is the author of *Lifesaving: A Memoir*, winner of the Lambda Book Award and finalist for the PEN/Martha Albrand Award for the Art of the Memoir and the Oregon Book Award. Many short memoirs have been published in literary magazines and anthologies and have won awards including the Sonora Annual Nonfiction Award and the Andres Berger Award for Creative Nonfiction. She is the author of three volumes of poetry, *Trying to Be an Honest Woman*, *History and Geography*, and *Horses and the Human Soul* (forthcoming). She has taught creative writing for the past twenty years at universities and summer writing workshops.