



# Now Write!: Fiction Writing Exercises from Today's Best Writers and Teachers

*Sherry Ellis*

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A collection of personal writing exercises and commentary from some of today's best novelists, short story writers, and writing teachers, including Jill McCorkle, Amy Bloom, Robert Olen Butler, Steve Almond, Jayne Anne Phillips, Virgil Suarez, Margot Livesay, and more.

What's the secret behind the successful and prolific careers of critically acclaimed novelists and short story writers Amy Bloom, Steve Almond, Jayne Anne Phillips, Alison Lurie, and others? Divine assistance? Otherworldly talent? An unsettlingly close relationship with the Muse? While the rest of us are staring at blank sheets of paper, struggling to come up with a first sentence, these writers are busy polishing off story after story and novel after novel. Despite producing work that may seem effortless, all of them have a simple technique for fending off writer's block: the writing exercise. In *Now Write!*, Sherry Ellis collects the personal writing exercises of today's best writers and lays bare the secret to their success.

- In "The Photograph," Jill McCorkle divulges one of her tactics for handling material that takes plots in a million different directions;
- National Book Award-nominee Amy Bloom offers "Water Buddies," an exercise for writers practicing their craft in workshops;
- Steve Almond, author of *My Life in Heavy Metal* and *Candyfreak*, provides a way to avoiding purple prose in "The Five-Second Shortcut to Writing in the Lyric Register";
- and eighty-three more of the country's top writers disclose their strategies for creating memorable prose.

Complemented by brief commentary from the authors themselves, the exercises in *Now Write!* are practical and hands-on. By encouraging writers to shamelessly steal proven techniques that have yielded books which have won National Book Awards, Pulitzers, and Guggenheim grants, *Now Write!* inspires the aspiring writer to *write now*.

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