

## BOOK REVIEW

### **The Art of Memoir**

Mary Karr; New York: Harper, 2015

*The goal of a voice [in memoir]  
is not to speak with objective authority  
but with subjective curiosity.  
~ Mary Karr*

Author of best-selling memoirs, Mary Karr has taught the art of writing memoir at Syracuse University for three decades. This synthesis of her expertise presents her fundamental approach to writing life story, but more importantly Karr repeatedly shows us how to write memoir through exposing her vulnerable self in vibrant body-based prose.

Like a course, the Art of Memoir addresses major topics such as the shape of the book, character development, family privacy, pushing through to the first draft, and the essential process of revision. An extensive appendix lists memoirs worth reading beforehand and while you write.

Writers need to practice writing. Every life can be a memoir, but a memoir emerges only after distilling life events to identify the story's emotional message(s) and how the narrator can grow over the course of that story.

*Memoir done right is an art, a made thing.*

The telling details make the story. Karr argues that literature differs from life, in that literature focuses attention on selected sensory details which elicit the meaning of experience. She insists that writers of their lives build upon rich sensory details to create setting, immediacy, and emotions.

*So a single image can split open the hard seed of the past, and soon memory pours forth from every direction, sprouting its vines and flowers up around you till the old garden's taken shape in all its fragrant glory. Almost unbelievable how much can rush forward to fill an absolute blankness.*

Memoir grows from lived experience – its readers draw hope from the fact that the author has not only survived both good and bad times but also created meaning from the up's and the down's.

VII. 6 | Sacred Carnality

My holy of holies is the human body.

Anton Chekhov. May 1888

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Carnality sits at the root of the 'show-don't tell' edict that every writing teacher harps on all the time, because it works. By carnal, I mean, Can you apprehend it through the five senses? In writing a scene, you must help the reader employ smell and taste and touch as well as image and noise. The more carnal a writer's nature, the better she'll be at this, and there are subcategories according to the senses. A great glutton can evoke the salty bite of pastrami on black rye; the sex addict will excel at smooth flesh; the one with a painterly eye visual beauty, etc. Every memoir should brim over with the physical experiences that once streamed in—the smell of garlicky gumbo, your hand in an animal's fur, the ocean's phosphor lighting up bodies underwater all acid green. Of all memoir's five elements, carnality is the most primary and necessary and—luckily for me as a teacher—the most easy to master.

My Texas oil-worker daddy introduced me as a kid to the raconteur's need for physical evidence when he told me a story ... 71

As a kid, one way I handled my own family crisis was to pick on a littler kid next door, Mickey Heinz. Yes, I was picked on, but I also did picking on back—part of the economy of misery handed down from older to younger on the block. While writing Liars' Club, I interrogated my memory, coming up with four possible details to give a reader.

1. A bunch of us dared him to take his pants off in his closet with a neighbor girl right before we knew his mama was coming home from a dash to the store.
2. I made him eat something nasty in a sandwichmud or dogshit, I can't recall which.
3. I used to ask him to play hide-and-seek and then just go home while he looked all afternoon.

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#### IX. 101 On Finding the Nature of Your Talent

Above all. don't lie to yourself. The man who lies to himself and listens to his own lie comes to a point where he cannot distinguish the truth within him or around him, and so loses respect for himself. And having no respect, he ceases to love.

Fyodor Dostoevsky

Write first drafts as candidly as possible, as close to your truth as possible, with intention of deciding what to disclose as you craft the finished product in later stages.

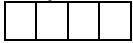
Trying to help students diagnose their own blind spots. I often ask the following questions:

1. What do people usually like and dislike about you? You should reflect both aspects in your pages.
2. How do you want to be perceived, and in what ways have you ever been false or posed as other than who you are? (Lovers/family yelling at you when they're mad have answered this one for you, btw.)
3. Is there any verbal signpost you can look for that suggests you're posturing? One kid I know started bringing in references to metal bands to show how cool he was. I might start yakking about philosophy. Any reader could answer these questions on my behalf, I think:

1. My friends usually like me because I'm tenderhearted, blunt, salty, and curious. I'm super loyal, and I laugh loud.

2. People don't like me because I'm emotionally intense and often cross boundaries—sometimes inadvertently, other times just being puckish. My disposition tends toward dark. Small talk at parties bores me senseless, and at weddings I prefer to dance rather than chitchat. I'm a little bit of a misanthrope. I cancel lunch dates because I'm working.
3. I'd love the cool voice of an emotionally reticent intellectual. My role in my family was to feel, so I was initially scared to feel on the page. Doing so felt too bald and lunk-headed. But when I get away from felt moments or stories, I'm giving up what I'm better at.
4. When I start digressing into highfalutin diction about intellectual subjects I know nothing about my father. They gave a big party during which his marginalia were displayed in glass cases. He stood before it and said loudly, "My writing," all night so onlookers could hear.

In short: How are you trying to appear? The author of a lasting memoir manages to power past the initial defenses, digging past the false self to where the truer one waits to tell the more complicated story.



### PRIVACY – dealing with loved ones, others

Among all the dozens of pals and shrinks and acquaintances I've sent manuscripts to, I've never had a detractor. Which probably says more about their generosity than my accuracy, so I count myself more lucky than expert.

For the record, here are my rules for dealing with others:

1. Notify subjects way in advance, detailing parts that might make them wince. So far, no one has ever winced.
2. On pain of death, don't show pages to anybody mid-process. You want them to see your best work, polished.
3. As Hubert Selby told Jerry Stahl, "If you're writing about somebody you hate, do it with great love."
4. Related to the above: I never speak with authority about how people feel or what their motives were. I may guess at it, but I always let the reader know that's speculative. I keep the focus on my own innards.
5. If somebody's opinion of what happened wholly opposes mine, I mention it in passing without feeling obliged to represent it.
6. Don't use jargon to describe people. It's both disrespectful and bad writing. I never called my parents alcoholics; I showed myself pouring vodka down the sink. Give information in the form you received it.
7. Let your friends choose their pseudonyms.
8. Try to consider the whole time you're working how your views—especially the harsh ones—may be wrong. Correct as needed.
9. With your closest compadres and touchy material, you might sit with them (same house or town, maybe not same room) while they read pages that may be painful for them.
10. I'd cut anything that someone just flat-out denies. Then again, in my family, all the worst stuff was long confessed to before I started writing the first tome.
11. Let the reader know how subjective your point of view is. This is in some way a form of respect to your subjects, who might disagree.

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**In any good memoir, the writer tries to meet the reader where she is by offering information in the way it's felt—to reflect the writer's inner values and cares either in clever linguistic form (like McCourt) or dramatic scene (like Orwell).**

### XIII. 15 | On Book Structure and the Order of Information

Do you wish to be great? Then begin by being. Do you desire to create a vast and lofty fabric? Think first about the foundations of humility. The higher your structure is to be, the deeper must be its foundation.

St. Augustine, City of God

In terms of basic book shape, I've used the same approach in all three of mine: I start with a flash forward that shows what's at stake emotionally for me over the course of a book, then tell the story in straightforward, linear time.

I wouldn't suggest that shape for everybody, but I would say you have to start out setting emotional stakes—why the enterprise is a passionate one for you, what's at risk—early on. That's why the flashback structure, which I borrowed from Conroy and Crews (among thousands of other storytellers), is a time-honored one. It's sitting on the coffin, telling the tale of a death—or rebirth, in my case.

Young writers often ask me to help them order information in a story. But there's a proven method you can try. Imagine 147

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### XIV. 19 | Old-School Technologies for the Stalled Novice

Yes, I felt very small. The typewriter seemed larger than a piano, I was less than a molecule. What could I do? I drank more.

Albert Sanchez Pinol, Pandora in the Congo

It's tough to keep going when you hit a roadblock in your own work. Many beginners just need to keep their heads in the game and their hands moving across pages till they gain traction. Some people tout writing exercises, but they never yielded squat to me. I'd encourage you to find intellectual enterprises to keep you studying craft. Maybe try some of the tools I've used to keep my ass in the chair, learning from my betters. Some of these involve writing longhand, shoving a gel-tip across an expanse. It will slow you down as typing can't.

1. Keep a commonplace book: a notebook where you copy beloved poems or hunks of prose out. Nothing will teach you a great writer's choices better.

you can carry your inspiration around with you in compact form.

2. Write reviews or criticism for an online blog or a magazine—it'll discipline you to find evidence for your opinions and make you a crisper thinker.

3. Augment a daily journal with a reading journal. Compose a one-page review with quotes. Make yourself back up opinions. You can't just say, "Neruda is a surrealist"; you have to quote him watching laundry dry "from which slow dirty tears are falling." And you have to look up something about surrealism to define it.

4. Write out longhand on three by-five-inch index cards quotes you come across—writer's name on the left, source and page on the right. (Stanley Kunitz taught me this circa 1978. I now have thousands of these, from which I cobble up lectures.)

5. Memorize poems when you're stuck. Poets teach you more about economy—not wasting a reader's time.

6. Write longhand letters to your complicated characters, or even to the dead. You'll learn more about voice by writing letters—how you arrange yourself different ways for each audience—than in a year of classes. 172

### 21 | Why Memoirs Fail

Needed: Authentic voice

Narrator changes over book

Pacing

## Sentences

### Use of body senses

My last memory is the Headmasters parting shot: "Well, good-bye. Graves, and remember that your best friend is the waste-paper basket." This has proved good advice .... few writers seem to send their work through as many drafts as I do.

Robert Graves, *Good Bye to All That*

Most memoirs fail because of voice. It's not distinct enough to sound alive and compelling. Or there are staunch limits to emotional tone, so it emits a single register. Being too cool or too shrill can ruin the read. The sentences are boring and predictable, or it's so inconsistent you don't know who's speaking or what place they come from. You don't believe or trust the voice. You're not curious about the inner or outer lives of the writer. The author's dead in the water.

We live in the age of the image, and it's too easy to learn carnal writing for a memoirist to sketch a foggy physical world sans evocative sensory detail. A lot of instruction manuals beam in on the physical, simply because you can master it. But few textbooks take up how the inner life manifests itself in a memoir's pages. In the more spectacular visual media like 183

## 22 | An Incomplete Checklist to Stave Off Dread

Plain words on plain paper Remember what Orwell says, that good prose is like a windowpane. Cut every page you write by at least a third. Stop constructing those piffling little similes of yours. Work out what you want to say. Then say it in the most direct and vigorous way you can. Eat meat. Drink blood. Give up your social life and don't think you can have friends. Rise in the quiet hours of the night and prick your fingertips and use the blood for ink; that will cure you of persiflage! But do I take my own advice? Not a bit. Persiflage is my nom de guerre. (Don't use foreign expressions. It's elitist.)

Hilary Mantel. *Giving Up the Ghost*

For those of you with a naturally generative talent, able to bang out pages by the ream, this chapter may only help you later in the process, when it's time to revise and organize and tighten. But mostly I'm writing for that human creature who sits down brimming with a story, then thinks. Oh, shit. What first? This chapter answers that, so far as I can. It should also lend some comfort: it's ok to be lost. Being lost—as I've said elsewhere—is a prelude to finding new paths. And any curious writer 189

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You will have to do a lot of wandering before any book's done. You won't have most of your elements on day one.

You should have:

1. Crisp memories—that carnal world in your head
2. Stories and a passion to tell them
3. Some introductory information or data to get across
4. The self-discipline to work in scary blankness for some period of time (for me it takes three to five weeks to find a way in, though I've been in the weeds for a year at a pop)

Everything else, you can figure out as you go. In fact, if you start telling your stories, the pieces tend to fall into place. As you work, you're looking for those other elements mentioned before—a voice that exploits your talent and an interior point of view, complete with an inner enemy to organize the book around. Writers hate formulas and checklists. It's way more fun to masquerade as a natural shaman who channels beautiful pages as the oracle once channeled Zeus. But looking at my own books, I've found they all include most of the stuff below—as do most of the books I teach.

Here's my list:

1. Paint a physical reality that uses all the senses and exists in the time you're writing about—a singular, fascinating place peopled with objects and characters we believe in. Should include the speaker's body or some kinesthetic elements.
  2. Tell a story that gives the reader some idea of your milieu and exploits your talent. We remember in stories, and for a writer, story is where you start.
  3. Package information about your present self or backstory so it has emotional conflict or scene.
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All the rest of these are interior:

4. Set emotional stakes—why is the writer passionate about or desperate to deal with the past—the hint of an inner enemy?
  5. Think, figure, wonder, guess. Show yourself weighing what's true, your fantasies, values, schemes, and failures.
  6. Change times back and forth—early on, establish the "looking back" voice, and the "being in it" voice.
  7. Collude with the reader about your relationship with the truth and memory.
  8. Show not so much how you suffer in long passages, but how you survive. Use humor or an interjecting adult voice to help a reader over the dark places.
  9. Don't exaggerate. Trust that what you felt deeply is valid.
  10. Watch your blind spots—in revision, if not before, search for reversals. Beware of what you avoid and what you cling to.
  11. (Related to all of the above) Love your characters. Ask yourself what underlay their acts and versions of the past. Sometimes I pray to see people I'm angry at or resentful or as God sees them, which heals both page and heart.
- And one big fat caveat: lead with your own talent, which may cause you to ignore all I've recommended. \*

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## 24 | Against Vanity: In Praise of Revision

The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and a lightning bug.

Mark Twain

Every writer I know who's worth a damn spends way more time "losing" than "winning"—if success means typing a polished page that lands in print as is. Scriveners tend to arrive at good work through revision. Look at Yeats's chopped-up fixes in facsimile form, or Ezra Pound's swashbuckling edits of Eliot's *Waste Land*. Without radical overhaul, those works might have sunk like stones.

In fact, after a lifetime of hounding authors for advice, I've heard three truths from every mouth: (1) Writing is painful—it's "fun" only for novices, the very young, and hacks; (2) other than a few instances of luck, good work only comes through revision; (3) the best revisers often have reading habits that stretch back before the current age, which lends them a sense of history and raises their standards for quality. Reading stuff in an antique sounding idiom is hard for 9

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## Appendix | Required Readings— Mostly Memoirs and Some Hybrids

The asterisked memoirs are books I've taught. Does this mean they're better written? Absolutely.

\*Adams, Henry. *The Education of Henry Adams and Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*.

\*Allende, Isabel. *The Sum of Our Days*. \*Als, Hilton. *The Women*.

Amis, Martin. *Experience*.

\*Angelou, Maya. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.

Antrim. Donald. The Afterlife.

\*Arenas, Reinaldo. Before Night Falls.

Ayer, Pico. Falling Off the Map.

\*Saint Augustine. Confessions.

Baldwin. James. Notes of a Native Son.

\* Batuman. Elif. The Possessed: Adventures with Russian Books and the People Who Read Them.

\*Beah, Ishmael. A Long Way Gone.

Beck, Edward. God Underneath: Spiritual Memoirs of a Catholic Priest. "

Bernhard. Thomas. Gathering Evidence.

\* Black Elk. Black Elk Speaks.

Blow. Charles M. Fin- Shut Up in My Bones.

Bourdain, Anthony. Kitchen Confidential.

Boyett, Micha. Found: A Story of Questions, Grace, and Everyday Prayer.

Brave Bird, Mary. Lakota Woman. Brickhouse, Jamie. Dangerous When Wet.

\*Brown, Claude. Manchild in the Promised Land.

\*Buford. Bill. Among the Thugs and Heat. «

Burgess. Anthony. Little Wilson and Big God: Being the First Part of the Confessions of Anthony Burgess.

Busch. Benjamin. Dust to Dust.

Cairns, Scott. Short Trip to the Edge.

Carr, David. The Night of the Gun.

Carroll. James. Practicing Catholic.

\*Chaudhuri, Nirad C. The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian.

""Chatwin, Bruce. In Patagonia.

Chast. Roz. Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?

\*Cheever, Susan. Home Before Dark.

""Cherry Garrard. Apsley. The Worst Journey in the World.

Churchill. Winston. My Early Life, 1874-1904.

Ciszek. Walter. SJ. With God in Russia. 'Coetzee. J. M. Boyhood.

Collins. Judy. Singing Lessons: A Memoir of Love, Loss, Hope, and Healing.

\*Conroy, Frank. Stop-Time.

Conway, Jill Ker. The Road from Coorain.

Covington, Dennis. Salvation on Sand Mountain.

""Crews, Harry. A Childhood: The Biography of a Place and Blood and Grits.

'Crick. Francis, and James Watson. The Double Helix.

Crowell, Rodney. Chinaberry Sidewalks.

Dau, John Bui. God Grew Tired of Us.

\*Day, Dorothy. The Long Loneliness.

•Dinesen, Isak. Out of Africa.

""Didion, Joan. The Year of Magical Thinking. ""

Dillard. Annie. An American Childhood.

\*Doty. Mark. Heaven's Coast.

Douglass, Frederick. Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave.

\*Du Bois. W. E. B. The Souls of Black Folk.

Dubus, Andre, III. Townie.

Dunham, Lena. Not That Kind of Girl.

Dylan, Bob. Chronicles.

Eggers. Dave. A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius.

Eire, Carlos. Waiting for Snow in Havana: Confessions of a Cuban Boy.

\*Exley, Frederick. A Fan's Notes.



Fey. Tina. Bossypants.  
 Forna. Aminatta. The Devil That Danced on the Water.  
 Fox, Paula. Borrowed Finery.  
 Frame. Janet. An Autobiography.  
 Frankl, Viktor. Man's Search for Meaning.  
 Franklin. Benjamin. The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin.  
 \*Frazier, Ian. On the Rez.  
 Frenkel, Edward. Love and Math.  
 Fuller. Alexandra. Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight.  
 \*Garcia Marquez, Gabriel. Living to Tell the Tale.  
 Gellhorn. Martha. Travels With Myself and Another.  
 Geronimo. My Life.  
 Gilbert, Elizabeth. Eat, Pray, Love. '  
 Ginzburg, Yevgenia. Journey into the Whirlwind.  
 \*Gourevitch, Philip. We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families.  
 'Graves, Robert. Good-Bye to All That.  
 Gray. Francine du Plessix. Them: A Memoir of Parents.  
 Grealy. Lucy. Autobiography of a Face.  
 Greene. Graham. A Sort of Life.  
 Guevara, Ernesto Che. The Motorcycle Diaries.  
 \*Haley, Alex, and Malcolm X. The Autobiography of Malcolm X.  
 Hamilton, Gabrielle. Blood, Bones & Butter.  
 Hampl, Patricia. ,4 Romantic Education. •Hardy, G. H.A Mathematician's Apology.  
 •Harrison, Kathryn. The Kiss.  
 •Haxton, Brooks. Fading Hearts on the River: A Life in High-Stakes Poker.  
 •Hemingway, Ernest. A Moveable Feast. \*Herr, Michael. Dispatches.  
 \*Hickey, Dave. Air Guitar.  
 Hogan, Linda. The Woman Who Watches Over the World.  
 Hongo, Garrett. Volcano: A Memoir of Hawaii Hooks, Bell. Bone Black.  
 Huang, Eddie. Fresh Off the Boat.  
 "Hurst, Zora Neale. Dust Tracks on a Road.  
 Irving. Debby. Waking Up White. Jackson, Phil. Sacred Hoops.  
 Jacobs. Harriet. Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl.  
 Jamison, Kay. An Unquiet Mind.  
 Jordan, June. Soldier: A Poet's Childhood.  
 Keller, Helen. The Story of My Life.  
 Kidder, Tracy. House.  
 \*Kincaid, Jamaica. My Brother.  
 King, Stephen. On Writing.  
 ^Kingston, Maxine Hong. The Woman Warrior.  
 Knausgard. Karl Owe. The Min Kamp (My Struggle) series.  
 \*Krakauer, Jon. Into Thin Air.  
 Lawrence, T. E. Seven Pillars of Wisdom.  
 Least Heat-Moon, William. Blue Highways: A Journey into America.  
 \*Levi, Primo. Survival in Auschwitz.  
 \* Lewis, C. S. Surprised by Joy.  
 Liao Yiwu. For a Song and a Hundred Songs: A Poet's Journey Through a Chinese Prison.  
 Lopate, Philip. Against Joie de Vivre.  
 \*Lorde, Audre. Zami: A New Spelling of My Name.  
 \*Lowell, Robert. "91 Revere Street," in Life Studies.  
 Macdonald, Helen. H Is for Hawk.



Malan, Rian. My Traitor's Heart.  
Mandela, Nelson. Conversations with Myself.  
\*Mandelstam, Nadezhda. Hope Against Hope and Hope Abandoned.  
Manguso, Sarah. The Two Kinds of Decay.  
\* Mantel. Hilary. Giving Up the Ghost.  
\*Markham. Beryl. West with the Night.  
Martin, Steve. Born Standing Up.  
,; Matthiessen, Peter. The Snow Leopard.  
Mayle, Peter. A Year in Provence.  
\*McBride. James. The Color of Water.  
McCarthy, Mary. Memories of a Catholic Girlhood.  
\*McCourt, Frank. Angela's Ashes.  
McPhee, John. Coming into the Country.  
\*Merton, Thomas. The Seven Storey Mountain.  
\*Milburn, Michael. Odd Man In.  
\*Mingus, Charles. Beneath the Underdog.  
Momaday, N. Scott. The Names.  
Monette. Paul. Borrowed Time: An AIDS Memoir.  
Moody, Anne. Coming of Age in Mississippi.  
Murakami, Haruki. What I Talk About When I Talk About Running. 224  
""Nabokov, Vladimir. Speak, Memory.  
Nafisi, Azar. Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books.  
\* Neruda, Pablo. Memoirs.  
Nolan, Ty. Memoir of a Reluctant Shaman.  
Norris, Kathleen. The Cloister Walk.  
Oates, Joyce Carol. A Widow's Story.  
Olsen, Tillie. Silences.  
\*Ondaatje, Michael. Running in the Family  
O'Rourke, Meghan. The Long Goodbye.  
Orwell, George. Homage to Catalonia, Burmese Days, and Down and Out in Paris and London.  
Parker, Mary Louise. Dear Mr. You.  
\*Patchett, Ann. Truth & Beauty.  
Pirsig, Robert. Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance.  
Raban, Jonathan. Bad Land.  
Radziwill. Carole. What Remains.  
Raphael, Lev. My Germany.  
Red Cloud, with Bob Drury and Tom Clavin. The Heart of Everything That Is.  
Reed, Ishmael. Blues City.  
Rios, Albert. Capirotada: A Nogales Memoir. ^  
Rodriguez. Richard. Hunger for Memory; The Education of Richard Rodriguez.  
Roth. Marco. The Scientists.  
Russell, Bertrand. The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell.  
\*St Aubyn, Edward. The Patrick Melrose novels.  
Sallans, Ryan. Second Son.  
Santiago, Esmeralda. When I Was Puerto Rican.  
Sartre, Jean-Paul. The Words.  
\*Sassoon, Siegfried. Memoirs of an Infantry Officer.  
""Shackleton, Ernest. South; The Endurance Expedition.  
Shakur, Assata. Assata.  
Shakur, Sanyika. Monster: The Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member.  
\*Shteyngart. Gary. Little Failure.

Sleigh, Tom. Interview with a Ghost.  
 Smith, Pmi. Just Kids.  
 Smith, Tracy K. Ordinary Light  
 . Solomon, Andrew. The Noonday Demon.  
 Sontag, Susan. Illness as Metaphor  
 Soto, Jock. Every Step You Take.  
 , Jerry. Permanent Midnight  
 . Strayed, Cheryl. Wild.  
 Tan, Amy. The Opposite of Fate: A Book of Musings.  
 Theroux, Paul. Old Patagonian Express.  
 Tolstoy, Leo. Childhood. Boyhood. Youth  
 . Thompson. Ahmir-Khalib.  
 Mo' Meta Blues: The World According to Questlove.  
 Thompson. Hunter S. Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas.  
 Trillin, Calvin. About Alice.  
 Twain, Mark. Autobiography of Mark Twain.  
 Walls, Jeannette. The Glass Castle.  
 Wainaina, Binyavanga. One Day I Will Write About This Place.  
 Washington. Booker T. Up from Slavery.  
 Watt, Robert Lee. The Black Horn.  
 Weil, Simone. Waiting for God, Gravity and Grace.  
 \* Welty, Eudora. One Writer's Beginnings  
 White, Edmund. My Lives.  
 White, T.H. The Goshawk.  
 "iWideman, John Edgar. Brothers and Keepers.  
 \*Wiesel, Elie. Night.  
 Winterson, Jeanette. Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal  
 ? \* Wolfe, Tom. The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test.  
 \* Wolff, Geoffrey. The Duke of Deception and A Day at the Beach.  
 \* Wolff, Tobias. This Boy's Life and In Pharaoh's Army.  
 Woolf, Virginia. Moments of Being.  
 \*Wright. Richard. American Hunger.  
 Yen Mah. Adeline. Falling Leaves: The Memoir of an Unwanted Chinese Daughter.  
 Zailckas. Koren. Smashed: Story of a Drunken Girlhood.

#### USEFUL BOOKS ABOUT MEMOIR

Adams, Timothy Dow. Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography.  
 Leibowitz, Herbert. Fabricating Lives  
 Shields, David. Reality Hunger.  
 Yagoda. Ben. Memoir: A History.