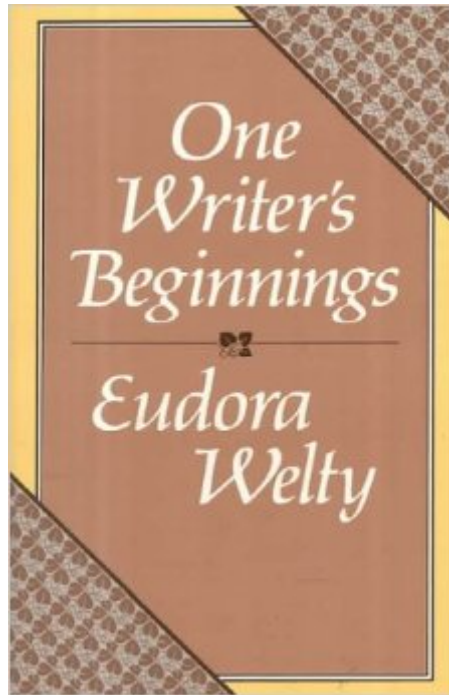


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One Writer's Beginnings



Synopsis

Now available as an audio CD, in Eudora Welty's own voice, or as a book. Eudora Welty was born in 1909 in Jackson, Mississippi. In a "continuous thread of revelation" she sketches her autobiography and tells us how her family and her surroundings contributed to the shaping not only of her personality but of her writing. Homely and commonplace sights, sounds, and objects resonate with the emotions of recollection: the striking clocks, the Victrola, her orphaned father's coverless little book saved since boyhood, the tall mountains of the West Virginia back country that become a metaphor for her mother's sturdy independence, Eudora's earliest box camera that suspended a moment forever and taught her that every feeling awaits a gesture. She has recreated this vanished world with the same subtlety and insight that mark her fiction. Even if Eudora Welty were not a major writer, her description of growing up in the South--of the interplay between black and white, between town and countryside, between dedicated schoolteachers and the public they taught--would be notable. That she is a splendid writer of fiction gives her own experience a family likeness to others in the generation of young Southerners that produced a literary renaissance. Until publication of this book, she had discouraged biographical investigations. It undoubtedly was not easy for this shy and reticent lady to undertake her own literary biography, to relive her own memories (painful as well as pleasant), to go through letters and photographs of her parents and grandparents. But we are in her debt, for the distillation of experience she offers us is a rare pleasure for her admirers, a treat to everyone who loves good writing and anyone who is interested in the seeds of creativity.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Eudora Welty is considered one of the greatest fiction writers of the 20th century. Being from Mississippi myself, I am embarrassed to admit that until about four years ago, I had never read any of her work. After reading 'The Golden Apples' and 'The Optimist's Daughter,' I realized what a treasure I'd missed. 'One Writer's Beginnings' belongs in that treasure chest as well. 'One Writer's Beginnings' would probably be better appreciated by readers who have read at least a short story or two by the late Ms. Welty. (She passed away last year.) Her style and charm are obvious from the first page, but if this is the first contact a reader has had with Welty, he or she may not appreciate the book fully. First of all, I should speak to what the book is NOT: It is not a how-to-be-a-writer book. It will not teach you how to tighten up your stories, how to plot, how to sell your stories, or anything else of a practical nature in the writing business. It is not a strict autobiography, although parts of Welty's life are described in detail. It is not a book to breeze through, even though it comes in at slightly over 100 pages. What is the book? It is actually a series of three lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1983 when the writer was 74 years old. The three parts are titled as follows: I. Listening - As a child, Welty spent many hours watching and listening to the people around her in Jackson, Mississippi. She carefully absorbed their stories and how they told them. She began to listen to and fall in love with words. II. Learning to See - As she stepped outside of her home to visit relatives along with her parents, Welty makes some wonderful discoveries about her family in West Virginia and Ohio. Time is "a continuous thread of revelation."

Eudora Welty's *One Writer's Beginnings* is an excellently composed book about the writer's personal life, and her personal style of writing. Welty is a very eminent writer, whose many honors include the Pulitzer Prize, the American Book Award for fiction, and the Gold Medal for the Novel given for her entire work in fiction. Thus her book about her own personal development as a writer is extremely important, since it provides essential clues to her success. *One Writer's Beginnings* is mainly focused on Welty's life, commencing with her childhood, and how it had a significant effect on her writing. Mainly the book is composed of three main topics: listening, learning to see, and finding a voice. These topics explain Welty's personal development as a writer, and one should definitely read and consider each one of them. *One Writer's Beginnings* is an interesting book, containing potent intellectual and emotional qualities, and also educational themes. *One Writer's Beginnings'* main themes are very elucidating, since they provide important clues to Welty's

success as a writer. The book commences with Welty's early life and the description of her family. In this she starts her first main topic- "listening". She describes her interest in listening to others, and she learned to be an observer. As she states, "A conscious act grew out of this by the time I began to write stories: getting my distance... is the way I begin work." This enchantment of listening helped Welty develop a clear idea on how to compose stories, and how to describe different personalities. The next main topic is "learning to see", which describes her impressions of every place she visited.

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