



# Old Friend from Far Away: The Practice of Writing Memoir

*Natalie Goldberg*

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Twenty years ago Natalie Goldberg's classic, *Writing Down the Bones*, broke new ground in its approach to writing as a practice. Now, *Old Friend from Far Away* -- her first book since *Writing Down the Bones* to focus solely on writing -- reaffirms Goldberg's status as a foremost teacher of writing, and completely transforms the practice of writing memoir.

To write memoir, we must first know how to remember. Through timed, associative, and meditative exercises, *Old Friend from Far Away* guides you to the attentive state of thought in which you discover and open forgotten doors of memory. At once a beautifully written celebration of the memoir form, an innovative course full of practical teachings, and a deeply affecting meditation on consciousness, love, life, and death, *Old Friend* welcomes aspiring writers of all levels and encourages them to find their unique voice to tell their stories.

Goldberg's enormously popular workshops have given countless students the ability to heed the call to write. *Old Friend from Far Away* recreates her trademark workshop style with its terse, demanding writing "sprints" that train the hand and mind to quicken their pace and give up conscious control. These exercises divert the eye from the obvious and redirect it to the tactile details we miss, the embarrassments we pass over, and the complications we overlook in the blur of everyday living. Goldberg writes, "No one says it, but writing induces the state of love." *Old Friend from Far Away* guides us into that state of love, where heightened attention and a rhythm of focus allow the patterns and details of the past to emerge on the page.

Millions of Americans want to write about their lives. With *Old Friend* as the road map for getting started and following through, writers and readers will gain a deeper understanding of their own minds, learn to connect with their senses in order to find the detail and truth that give their written words power and authenticity, and unfold the natural structure of the stories they carry within. An absolute joy to read, it is a profound affirmation of the capacity of the written word to remember the past, free us from it, and forever transform the way we think about ourselves and our lives. Like *Writing Down the Bones*, it will become an old friend to which readers return again and again.

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