

Before We Get Started: A Practical Memoir of the Writer's Life

By Bret Lott

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This marvelous guide begins where other books on writing and the writing life leave off. Delving deep into the creative process, Bret Lott reveals truths we scarcely realized we needed to know but without which we as writers will soon lose our way. In ten intimate essays based on his own experiences and on the seasoned wisdom of writers including Eudora Welty, E. B. White, Henry David Thoreau, Henry James, and John Gardner, Lott explores such topics as

• why write? why keep writing?
• the importance of simple words
• the finer points of character detail
• narrative and the passage of time
• the pitfalls of technique
• making a plan–and letting it go
• risking failure–and reaping the benefits
• Accepting rejection

Writers travel alone, but Bret Lott’s book makes the journey less lonely and infinitely more rewarding. Before We Get Started will help you make your work as good as it can be: “Pay attention recklessly. Strain to see through the window of your own artistic consciousness in the exhilarating knowledge that there is no path to the waterfall, and there are a million paths to the waterfall, and there is, too, only one path: yours.”

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Before We Get Started: A Practical Memoir of the Writer's Life By Bret Lott Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #54768 in Books
- Published on: 2005-01-25
- Released on: 2005-01-25
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.97" h x .46" w x 5.17" l, .33 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 224 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
Lott was a little-known writer of literary fiction until Oprah Winfrey selected his then out-of-print novel *Jewel* for her TV book club, rocketing him into publishing's major leagues. In this candid memoir and literary handbook, Lott looks back to the hard times before Oprah, when he was forced to juggle raising a young family with a demanding teaching job that left him little time for writing. Recently named editor of the *Southern Review*, Lott offers via his reminiscences plenty of practical advice on the craft of writing, which for him is intricately bound up with observation and soulfulness. His hero is Raymond Carver, and his literary values echo those of the master; he urges writers to attend to the weight of every word, to the material reality of characters' daily working lives and to the handling of time. Beginning writers will appreciate the heartfelt supportiveness of his counsel as he imparts encouragement and insight. Of wider cultural interest is Lott's critique of the irony hawked by such writers as David Foster Wallace and of the so-called postironic Dave Eggers. Lott advances a case for a new and radically more hopeful genre of fiction. He imparts his own brand of wisdom on writing and the world of publishing with resounding candor and sincerity.
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From Booklist
Lott's fourth book, the novel *Jewel* (1991), was eight years old and out of print when Oprah chose it for her book club, thus radically altering his modest existence. Lott now looks back on his long struggle to get published in a stealthily affecting memoir. Writing with equal measures of humility and authority, Lott, who declares himself a "follower of Christ," passionately elucidates his belief in literature as a profound undertaking that induces one to pay keen attention to life, seek meaning, and practice compassion. But oh, how very difficult a calling writing can be. Wanna-be writers will find Lott's account of his deliberately methodical approach to submitting stories to magazines, then logging in hundreds of rejections (talk about faith), morbidly fascinating. He also discusses the different challenges involved in writing fiction and creative nonfiction; dissects irony; and relates such ludicrous goings-on as the time he was able to sell a novel only by using a nom de plume. Lott reaches great emotional depths as he reflects on everything from literary technique to family life to matters of the spirit, and tracks the amazing convergences, munificent revelations, and good fortune that can be engendered by a life of artistic conviction, devotion, and good old stick-to-itiveness. *Donna Seaman*
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Review
“Learning to write . . . is a desperately idiosyncratic, eccentric, single-souled, lifelong quest.”
–BRET LOTT from Before We Get Started

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Maureen Harris:

What do you regarding book? It is not important with you? Or just adding material if you want something to explain what the one you have problem? How about your spare time? Or are you busy person? If you don't

have spare time to complete others business, it is give you a sense of feeling bored faster. And you have free time? What did you do? Everyone has many questions above. They have to answer that question simply because just their can do in which. It said that about reserve. Book is familiar in each person. Yes, it is proper. Because start from on pre-school until university need this particular Before We Get Started: A Practical Memoir of the Writer's Life to read.

Jennifer Trojanowski:

The guide with title Before We Get Started: A Practical Memoir of the Writer's Life includes a lot of information that you can discover it. You can get a lot of help after read this book. That book exist new understanding the information that exist in this guide represented the condition of the world now. That is important to yo7u to know how the improvement of the world. This kind of book will bring you inside new era of the glowbal growth. You can read the e-book in your smart phone, so you can read the idea anywhere you want.

Dennis Winters:

Your reading sixth sense will not betray an individual, why because this Before We Get Started: A Practical Memoir of the Writer's Life publication written by well-known writer who really knows well how to make book that could be understand by anyone who all read the book. Written in good manner for you, still dripping wet every ideas and creating skill only for eliminate your own personal hunger then you still hesitation Before We Get Started: A Practical Memoir of the Writer's Life as good book but not only by the cover but also by content. This is one book that can break don't judge book by its deal with, so do you still needing another sixth sense to pick this!? Oh come on your studying sixth sense already alerted you so why you have to listening to a different sixth sense.

Marge Lee:

As a student exactly feel bored to reading. If their teacher expected them to go to the library in order to make summary for some reserve, they are complained. Just little students that has reading's heart or real their hobby. They just do what the teacher want, like asked to go to the library. They go to at this time there but nothing reading really. Any students feel that reading through is not important, boring as well as can't see colorful images on there. Yeah, it is to become complicated. Book is very important for yourself. As we know that on this era, many ways to get whatever we want. Likewise word says, ways to reach Chinese's country. So , this Before We Get Started: A Practical Memoir of the Writer's Life can make you really feel more interested to read.

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