

Writers Dreaming: 26 Writers Talk About Their Dreams and the Creative Process

By Naomi Epel


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As they discuss their dreams--both sleeping and waking--with Naomi Epel, the 26 writers in this intriguing book create a portrait of the creative process that is more candid than most autobiographies and more inspiring than any guide to writing.

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- Sales Rank: #714172 in Books
- Published on: 1994-12-05
- Released on: 1994-12-05
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .50" w x 5.00" l,
- Binding: Paperback
- 292 pages



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Stephen King, Maya Angelou, William Styron, Art Spiegelman and others discuss their dreams and the roles they play in a writer's work.

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From Library Journal

Epel, a writer, dream researcher, radio talk-show host, and literary escort, has compiled interviews with 26 fiction authors she has chauffeured around San Francisco. She explores how these writers turn their dreams into art, how dreams affect their personal lives, and how their own questions about their dreams reveal their creative processes. A page-length biographical sketch and a photo precede each author's chapter. The monologs are often stream of consciousness and cover topics tangential to dreams but related to writing as well: e.g., Maya Angelou discusses overcoming writer's block; Sue Grafton describes plotting a mystery; and Stephen King examines symbolism. A fascinating work, but not a necessary purchase.

- *Cathy Sabol, Northern Virginia Community Coll., Manassas*

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From Kirkus Reviews

It's well known that Coleridge dreamed, word-for-word, his great poem "Kublai Khan"--but not that William Styron wrote the opening paragraphs of *Sophie's Choice* after dreaming of a woman with tattooed numbers on her arm, or that Stephen King based the horrific Marston House of Salem's Lot on a dream he had as an eight-year-old. Here, Epel (host of a Berkeley-based radio show) presents commentary from 26 writers on how dreams have influenced their work and their lives. Though the commentary derives from interviews, Epel has edited out her questions and sewn the answers into smooth-flowing essays from the likes of Maya Angelou, Clive Barker, Elmore Leonard, Gloria Naylor, Reynolds Price, Anne Rice, Robert Stone, and Amy Tan--a remarkable number of whom keep close track (often in dream-journals) of the dreams from which they draw literary ideas or at least inspiration: John Barth says that once every four years or so, he enjoys a "Charles-Dickens-scale dream," one "with lots of complications and even subplots." And it's interesting to note that, perhaps in keeping with the intimacy of the dreaming that influences them, a number of these authors disavow word processors in favor of more intimate writing tools: Elmore Leonard writes in longhand and then transcribes using an Olympia manual typewriter, while Spalding Gray corrects his longhand again in longhand, with a red-ink pen. Full of surprising insights, these interview/essays make a genuine contribution to our understanding of the writing process. (Twenty-six b&w photos--not seen) -- *Copyright ©1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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