



Story Circle Journal

Volume 2 Number 1

The newsletter for women who have stories to tell...

Story Circle Board Grows

The new year got off to a quick start here at the Story Circle Network headquarters in Austin TX, with the enlargement of our board of directors to 18 members.

Expanding the Story Circle's original 12-member board emerged as a high priority toward the end of 1997, as board members began to look ahead to the work that needs to be done to meet the Network's mission and the expertise we needed.

The board members elected to fill the six newly-created places bring a variety of skills and experience to their work. Molly Ficken is the former director of the Jung Society in Austin TX. Kay Lewis is engaged in a research project on youth ministry and has written on grief. Leticia Garza-Falcon directs the Multicultural and Gender Studies Program at Southwest Texas State University. **Mary Jane Marks** is interested in genealogy and chronicling family history and works with a variety of women's and senior organizations. Sarah Silvus has worked in several Story Circles. Ramona Toines is active in church organizations. In addition, two new members were elected to fill the places of retiring members: Catherine Cogburn, a psychotherapist who works with issues of attitudinal healing; and Sarah Gaertner, a teacher with a background in public relations.

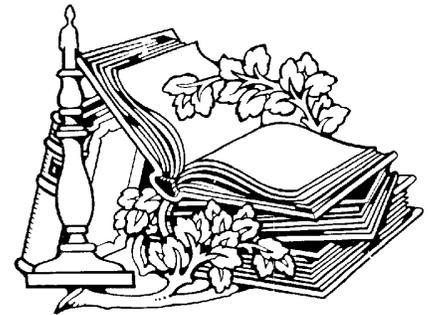
These eight new members join ten Networkers already serving on the board: Carol Abbassi, Susan Albert, Norma Bishop, Nancy Blue, Ellen Halbert, Eleanor Jordan, Inez Jeffrey, Hannah O'Donoghue, Judy Rohde, and Jean Springer.

High on the list of priorities for 1998 is the development and evaluation of local programs which might also be used as models for women's Story Circle programs and activities in other cities. Spring classes include a journaling class, a class in women's spiritual journeys, a monthly reading circle, and workshops in scrapbooking and memoir writing. In addition, there will be a facilitators' group designed to help create new Story Circles. Plans are also in the works to create on-going Story Circles in two women's correctional units in Texas. Another project involves a joint program with Girls Inc. in Dallas, designed to encourage girls to tell their stories.

The development of classes and workshops is only one of the Network's priorities. One of our workgroups is looking at the need for refocusing and redesigning the newsletter. Another workgroup is laying plans for an expanded publicity effort in order to get the word out about the Network's activities. The same group monitors the Network's web site, which is

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I have thought for as long as I can remember that the asking of unanswerable questions and the facing of irreparable truths is our only consolation for having to live them.— Catherine Madsen



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Off to a Quick Start—*from Page 1*

located at <http://www.storycircle.org>.

If you've ever been involved with starting a new organization, you know there are many challenges to meet, all at once. We on the Story Circle board are pleased with what we've accomplished, but we know that there's a long way to go. We're especially challenged by the need to create a strong group of members in our local area, while at the same time we help women in other cities create Story Circles. *The Story Circle Journal* plays a crucial role at the national level, but we need a broader subscription base to justify the effort of continuing the newsletter.

The Story Circle Network

The Story Circle Network—What is it and who are the members?

The Story Circle Network is made up of women who want to explore their lives by exploring their stories.

What can I gain from the Network?

You will receive the following publications, information, and opportunities. These things won't be available all at once—we're just getting started! But as our membership grows, our activities will expand. You'll get:

- ◇ **four issues** of the 16- to 22-page newsletter, *Story Circle Journal*, with ideas for writing additional chapters of your life story, plus poetry and brief personal essays from subscribers
- ◇ **the opportunity to submit your writing** to the newsletter and other Network publications
- ◇ **a network guide** that will allow you to directly contact members with interests and experiences similar to yours (forthcoming, as the Network grows and members send us their information)
- ◇ **a list of Story Circles** across the country, in each issue of the newsletter
- ◇ **book reviews and a resource guide** listing groups, teachers, and publications that are committed to helping women tell their stories (in each newsletter)
- ◇ **a calendar** of happenings and events related to women's storytelling (in each newsletter, as members submit information)

What can I contribute to the Network?

The Story Circle Network is built out

of our shared experiences. To it, we hope you will bring your-self and your willingness to share your life and what you have learned from it. If you wish, you may contribute some of your writing (poetry, prose, book reviews—ask for a copy of our writer's guidelines). If you are a teacher or group leader, you are invited to calendar your related events.

We also hope that many of you will decide to participate by leading a Story Circle in your community. It isn't hard, and it's enormously rewarding. Won't you give it a try?

How do I become a member?

That's the easiest part! You automatically become a member of the Network when you subscribe to *Story Circle Journal*. Annual memberships are \$20 in the United States, \$26 in Canada and Mexico, and \$30 elsewhere. You will find a membership form at the back of this newsletter. Please join us and share your story.

You're on the Net?

So are we!

www.storycircle.org



Story Circle

STORY CIRCLE is a quarterly newsletter, published in February, May, August, and November. It is written by and for women who want to share their experiences. Its purpose is to encourage readers to become writers, guide women to set down their true stories, and encourage the sharing of women's lives. This newsletter is provided for information and is not intended to replace qualified therapeutic assistance.

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Back Issues: Back issues are available either as first-run or photocopies, for \$5.50 each (includes first class postage). Canada, Mexico, and elsewhere: \$8 each.

Missed Issues: We try to ensure that *Story Circle Journal* arrives in your mailbox four times a year. If you miss an issue, send us a note and we'll mail you a replacement.

Change of address: If you move, please tell us. Unless you send us your new address, we can't guarantee that you'll receive your newsletter!



The Journaling Page

The Autobiography of a Diarist

a guest column by lisa shumicky

As a diarist, I write
 As a librarian I read, study, and collect resources.
 (Though I'd probably do that even if I wasn't a librarian,
 so in love with diaries & journals (I use the terms interchangeably)
 am I . . . Herein, you'll find my two main identities intertwined.)

Like almost every young girl, my first diary was the fifth-grade lock-and-key type which lasted a month or two into that new year. In junior high, in my back-to-nature, crush-on-my-French-teacher phase, the recording bug bit again and for several years I kept a journal called "naturellement" in a collection of (always) green-covered spiral notebooks. By the end of high school, my diary writing petered out to scrapbooking highlights of my less-than-satisfying senior year.

That was it until an undergraduate college English course in 1978 with a wonderful professor whose course requirement was a journal kept in response to our readings in women and fiction and autobiography—Maya Angelous, Maxine Hong Kingston, and the anthology *Revelations: Diaries of Women* (edited by Mary Jane Moffat). It was here that I learned of the rich history of women writing, and undertook my own writing and study in earnest.

My current journal practice borrows from various sources I have encountered in the intervening years. It involves a two-notebook system. One notebook is my *lisa's journal*, sometimes subtitled, sometimes not (the current volume is subtitled "Anais") which contains the more "traditional" sort of journal entries:

Today I...
 I want to...
 I feel...

The other notebook is a freewrite (à la Natalie Goldberg in *Writing Down the Bones* and *Wild Mind*) notebook where I start with a word or phrase at the top of my page and "tell everything I know" about it . . . and veer off to surprising places, which is the beauty of free-writing for me. (Natalie recommends keeping all your writing in one place but that just doesn't work for me right now.) I think of these two volumes as having a sort of dialogue.

Or diary-logue. When I'm feeling stuck in one, I can turn to the other to have the words flow again. Alternately, when I'm going on and on in one, I can turn to the other to change my flow.

One suggestion that all the diary guidebook writers (Kay Adams' *Journal to the Self*), Christina Baldwin's *One to One* and *Life's Companion*), Tristine Rainer (*The New Diary*) make and I agree with is to date everything.

My habit is to write several times during the day. A few minutes in the "between time" in the morning—between the time my husband leaves for work and the time I have to. I'll record my morning walk, or a dream, or an overnight insight, or make a list of the things I want to attend to during the day. Julia Cameron in *The Artist's Way* recommends writing three (Morning) Pages first thing (no exception) each morning. Sometimes I do that—after I take my walk! (I make exceptions, and pick & choose.)

I write again on my lunch hour, taking my notebooks and myself to a pizzeria, having a slice, then spending the rest of the time writing. Lately this has become not enough, so I have also set aside a "golden hour" in the evening, where, at my desk in my writing room in the glow of a lamp sitting on the corner of the desk, I write for an hour (or more if necessary).

The main reason I write is to get it out (whatever's in my head), get it down on the page so I don't lose it, so that my mind can start thinking about other things. Aside from the pleasure I derive from it!, and the fact that this has become (or always has been and I realize that and honor it) the way I figure things out.

Now here comes the blatantly librarian part!

If the blank page intimidates you, there are lots of books that you can find writing suggestions and exercises in. Along with those already mentioned and Susan Wittig Albert's wonderful *Writing From Life*, there is also Deena Metzger (*Writing For YourLife*), *poemcrazy* by Susan Wooldridge, and two by John Fox if you want to work poetically: *Finding What You Didn't Lose* and *Poetic Medicine*.

You may also enjoy Marlene Schiwy's *A Voice of Her Own*; *A Walk Between Heaven and Earth*, a diary about writing a diary by Nina Holzer; Kay Hagan's *Prayers to the Moon* and *Internal Affairs*; *Journaling For Joy* by Joyce Chapman; *Room To Write*, by Bonni Goldberg; and for those artistically inclined, Hannah Hinchman's *A Life in Hand* and *A Trail Through Leaves*.

Every diarist and every potential diarist (anyone who doesn't currently keep a journal is a *potential* diarist) has a unique style and voice. I encourage you to follow your pen (picking and choosing, experimenting, as I have done) to uncover your own.

lisa shumicky  coordinates the National Journal Network, a group of committed diarists that shares between and among themselves. Annual membership is \$15 and includes a 20-30 page newsletter. For further information, write to lisa shumicky, 32 Fischer Avenue, Islip Terrace NY 11752.

MEMORY BOOK SUPPLIES

A trip to your local craftstore will show you some of the fascinating scrapbooking supplies that have recently appeared on the market. But you don't have to buy out the store to begin designing creative memory books. Among the basics are these:

- ❖ an album or binder with acid-free pages. Your album might be three-ring, expandable, or book-bound.
- ❖ adhesives: acid-free photo tape and stickers (double-stick), glue sticks, neutral pH adhesive
- ❖ fade-proof and waterproof pens, pencils, and markers.
- ❖ sharp-pointed craft scissors
- ❖ sheet protectors

If you continue to enjoy scrapbooking, you might also want to acquire some of these special-purpose tools and supplies:

- ❖ decorative edge scissors
- ❖ craft punches
- ❖ corner rounder
- ❖ r u b b e r s t a m p s ,
embossing powders
- ❖ embossing stencils
- ❖ paper crimper
- ❖ circle cutter
- ❖ decorative edge rulers
- ❖ decorative papers for page backgrounds and photo frames
- ❖ templates
- ❖ stencils and stickers
- ❖ decorative pre-cut photo frames

There are several scrapbook-making books on the market. One we've enjoyed is **Making Scrapbooks: A Complete**



Memory Books

In our last issue, we included an article on scrapbooking—the old practice of filling albums with photographs, notes, clippings, and pressed flowers. These memory books are enjoying a revival, and because they are another way of telling our stories, we'd like to share a few more scrapbooking ideas with you.

Special Focus Memory Books

In the old days, our scrapbooks were a jumble of everything: photos of friends, notes from a teacher, newspaper clippings—all mixed up together. The “new” memory book often has a special focus, so that our memories are gathered together. These special focus books can also include pieces of writing: stories about the events or the people that are being honored in the book.

One good example of this is the baby book: a collection of photographs and memorabilia surrounding the birth and the first three or four years of a favorite child. Using some of the exciting new scrapbooking techniques (see sidebar), creatively assemble and display the photos and memorabilia you've collected. This memory book will also include family stories. Mom might write her recollections of her pregnancy (perhaps including memories of the day she learned she was pregnant, the day she first heard her baby's heartbeat, and the birth itself). Dad might write his impressions of the baby's birth and the changes the new child brought to the family's life. Grandmas and grandpas and aunts and uncles could make a contribution, and even young brothers and sisters could add something to the book: an “as-told-to” story recorded on tape by Mom or Dad. A book like this, combining

photos, memorabilia, and stories, can be a valuable treasure for the entire family, and a priceless possession for the person whose birth it honors.

Another special-focus memory book might celebrate a special occasion, such as a wedding anniversary. One daughter we know organized a memory book for her parents' fiftieth wedding anniversary. The book included a collection of photos of the couple over the years, lovingly and creatively arranged, with memories and stories handwritten by children, sisters and brothers, and friends.

Other special family celebrations, such as weddings, christenings, graduations, and birthdays also lend themselves beautifully to the creation of a memory book. A vacation, a retreat, or a special journey also provide wonderful subjects, as do holiday celebrations, community activities, and school events. In fact, the range of possibilities is limited only by your imagination!

Here are some tips for compiling your own special memory book.

- ❖ Set up a workspace that you can leave unattended. Collect all your memorabilia and scrapbook supplies in that space.
- ❖ Create a file folder for each page or group of pages (depending on your project). This will keep related materials together.
- ❖ Ask family members to identify all the people in the photos. Use a photo labeling pencil to write names on the back or sides of the photo.
- ❖ Choose a color scheme and accessories that will complement your theme.

Memory books can help us tell our

Out of the Fire

by Susan Wittig Albert

*Each issue, in these pages, Susan writes about life-writing. Her articles are designed to help you add chapters to your life story. They will usually take the form of the chapters of **Writing From Life**, offering ideas and topics for your writing, examples and clippings from the writing of other women, organizational suggestions, and ways to celebrate your creation. If you do all the exercises suggested here, you will have enough material to create one full chapter of your book—the story of your life, to which (we hope) you are continuing to add new chapters. So look into your experience, pull out those memories, and open a new chapter in the story of your life.*

Life never promised us a rose garden....



As we begin to work thoughtfully and intentionally with our stories, one of the first things we understand is that it's not all a bed of roses.

Now, that's a very simple thought, and maybe, on the surface, it seems pretty obvious. Every life has its dark moments as well as its bright. Every sunny day has at least one or two shadows, someplace.

But where women's stories are concerned, it isn't so obvious. In fact, as Carolyn Heilbrun points out in her wonderful little book *Writing A Woman's Life*, it is only recently that women have allowed themselves to publicly acknowledge the darkness in their lives. We've always been pretty good at keeping secrets, haven't we? We've always been pretty good at putting the best face on things: wearing a bright smile and acting as if everything is all right—when we know darn well it isn't.

So one of the early things we have to understand, when we are telling our stories, is that we must tell the *whole* story, the dark with the bright. As we do this, we begin to see how our difficult experiences have shaped us, given us depth and dimension, and opened us to new passages and new chapters in our lives. We can even acknowledge that out of the fire of trial and tragedy, we grow into new ways of seeing ourselves and our world.



Out of the Fire: An Unknown Woman

At 37, Alice Koller wasn't exactly a success. She had a graduate degree but only a busy-work job, was living in a borrowed apartment, had no close relationships, and no money. But worst of all, she had no *self* she could call her own.

I stare into the mirror. I don't have a life: I'm just using up a number of days somehow. There is no *reason* for me to be here. No plan formulated at some point in the past has led me to this void that is my day, every day. No obligation to anyone requires me to live in this apartment, or in this city. I don't live anywhere: I perch.

Courageous risks are life giving, they help you grow, make you brave and better than you think you are.—Joan Curcio

Deeply impelled toward evolving consciousness, we seem to be ever laboring to bring to birth in ourselves new levels of being... Our efforts are our history, and our history may be read as symptoms of this work... We live within a presence which we may experience as a kind of inner lawfulness—a way, a path, which, if we hew to it, leads us into adventures beyond our imagining... Even disaster is meaningful; but its meaningfulness does not save it from happening, nor us from suffering.—M.C. Richards

You can't be brave if you've only had wonderful things happen to you.—Mary Tyler Moore

You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, "I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along." You must do the thing which you think you cannot do.—Eleanor Roosevelt

There is nothing to fear except the persistent refusal to find out the truth, the persistent refusal to analyze the causes of happenings. Fear grows in darkness; if you think there's a bogeyman around, turn on the light.—Dorothy Thompson

Fears are great motivators, especially for writers. Much of our strongest material comes from what we are afraid of. When you call up your fears in ritual or prayer you also call up protective forces. It is the same with writing. In fact, the act of writing is what protects you. It's like homeopathic medicine. You take small doses of your fears in combination with written words and they create a kind of antibody: a cathartic human experience that authenticates your strength and fragility—Bonni Goldberg

One idyllic summer between college years I read Tolkien's Middle Earth trilogy and was struck with the metaphor of transformation when the wizard Gandalf fell into the Crack of Doom and disappeared for much of the next book. When the battle between good and evil is at its height, he re-emerges as Gandalf the White, a personage who has been burned back to the bone, whose power and wisdom have been honed in the fires of earth itself. Meanwhile, we hobbit-like travelers tend to become enchanted with promises of growth and spiritual reunion and avoid asking exactly how this transformation is likely to occur. Despair is the transformational event. Despair is our chance to wrestle with fire and come through.—Christina Baldwin

But having seen this important truth about herself, Koller begins to make some decisions. She quits her job, acquires a dog that she names Logos (meaning: *Word*), and rents an off-season cottage on Nantucket Island. She spends the entire time there writing her story—the book that became *An Unknown Woman*:

I sit in front of my typewriter.... I'm here to understand myself, deliberately to turn myself open to my own view. I know, as I sit here, what I must have known for many years: that I can recognize what's true about myself when I see it. It's whatever I find myself refusing to admit, whatever I say no to very fast... I'm using that "no" to protect myself from something. What? I'll find out. I'll write down everything I can remember, so that I can see the full extent of it, pick out some patterns in what I've been denying for so long. So that's first, to get it all written, no matter how ugly.

That, I think, is the first and most remarkable thing about this incredibly honest and difficult book: that Koller faces, squarely and with courage, the ugly things that have happened to her and finds in them the deepest truths about herself and her life.

The second remarkable thing is that she faces herself *by writing herself*, and that the act of writing summons a new self into being. And the third remarkable thing is that she does all this without whining and complaining, without feeling sorry for herself, and without abusing herself. Throughout her painful narrative, she speaks in a tone of thoughtful, objective exploration: she is gentle and compassionate in her efforts to understand—and ruthless with her own self-deceptions. If you are looking for a book to be your guide as you begin the challenging work of writing your true story—all of your story, and all of it honestly—start with *An Unknown Woman*. It will give you a model. It will show you the way. And best of all, it will give you heart.



Out of Despair

Another book I have found helpful in writing about difficult experiences is a journaling book by Christina Baldwin, called *Life's Companion: Journal Writing as a Spiritual Quest*. In that book, Baldwin includes a chapter on disorder and despair, which she says are gifts.

Gifts? Despair is a *gift*? Listen to Baldwin: "The gift of despair is that it offers us a process for making peace with what is and becoming comfortable with new perceptions." Well, fair enough. But how does this work? And how do we use this idea when we are telling our stories?

The function of darkness and despair in our lives, according to many psychologists, is to clear the decks of the old stuff of our lives and help us come to terms with something new that is emerging. Here are some writing questions that might help you think through the dark events of your life, and see what

grew out of them. To use these most effectively, choose a difficult time or event that you want to write about, think quietly about it for a few minutes, then answer the questions on paper, writing as much as you are able at any one sitting:

- What happened to make you feel despairing? What did you lose? What was taken from you? Was there an illness, an accident? How did it happen? When did it begin? How did you feel at that time?
- What had your life been like up to that moment?
- How old were you? Where were you? Who was with you? How were you living during this time?
- What was the very worst time of this period, the crisis? How did you handle it? How did you cope?
- What did you do well during this time? What didn't you do well?
- How did things begin to get better? Who helped? What helped? How did you discover these helpers? How did they affect the process of change or healing?
- As things got better, what could you see and understand about the experience? How was it changing you? What were you learning about yourself and others?
- What old assumptions about yourself were stripped away in this difficult time? What old expectations or desires or fears no longer seemed relevant?
- When the experience was finally over, how was life different for you? How were *you* different? How did your perceptions change? What did the experience teach you to pay attention to?
- What would your life have been like if you had not experienced this difficult time?
- What new growth came out of this fire?
- What blessings came from this time?
- What are you now, what do you have, that you would not be or have if this experience had not happened to you?
- What other questions can you think of that might help you to focus on these events in your life?

These are difficult questions, and answering them may take a very long time—months of writing, perhaps, and hundreds of pages. In fact, whole books have grown out of exactly these questions, and entire new *lives* have grown from their exploration.

My own despair is one example: at the age of 45, close to the pinnacle of success in my academic career, I was so physically and psychologically disabled by that very career that I abandoned it. To try to understand what had happened to me, I began to write. The act of writing out of despair—literally, a life-saving act for me—produced the book *Work of Her Own*, for and about women whose real selves had been swallowed up in their careers. Writing my story and the similar stories of other women gave my life a new dimension, and a new purpose.

Another example is the life of psychologist Linda Schierse Leonard, whose work as a psychologist grew out of her troubled relationship with her father. *The Wounded Woman*, the book she wrote to explore this very personal connection, is a classic of women's psychology, blending her true story with the stories of clients within a framework of Jungian psychology.

It always come down to the same necessity; go deep enough and there is a bedrock of truth, however hard.—May Sarton

After despair, the laundry.—Zen saying

What I fear in writing is the safe decision.—Ann Rice

I began to have an idea of my life, not as the slow shaping of achievement to fit my preconceived purposes, but as the gradual discovery and growth of a purpose which I did not know.—Joanna Field

While others may argue about whether the world ends with a bang or a whimper, I just want to make sure mine doesn't end with a whine.—Barbara Gordon

*Nothing in life is to be feared. It is only to be understood.—
Marie Curie*

It had been my repeated experience that when you said to life calmly and firmly (but very firmly!), “I trust you; do what you must,” life had an uncanny way of responding to your need.—Olga Ilyin

If you can't be a good example, then you'll just have to be a horrible warning.—Catherine Aird

Accept that all of us can be hurt, that all of us can—and surely will at times—fail. Other vulnerabilities, like being embarrassed or risking love, can be terrifying too. I think we should follow a simple rule: if we can take the worst, take the risk.—Joyce Brothers

*I wanted a perfect ending
Now I've learned, the hard way, that some poems don't rhyme, and some stories don't have a clear beginning, middle and end. Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what's going to happen next. Delicious ambiguity.—
Gilda Radner*

Here are a few other “out-of-the-fire” books that may help you to see your own story more clearly and will certainly teach you some important truths about the joy and pain of being woman:

A Match to the Heart: One Woman's Story of Being Struck by Lightning, by Gretel Ehrlich. (See pages 12-13 for a review of this book.)

Swimming the Channel: A Memoir of Love, Loss, and Healing, by Sally Friedman. The story of a woman who, at the moment of her greatest triumph, loses the man she loves.

Waist-High in the World: A Life Among the Nondisabled, by Nancy Mairs. Mairs suffers from multiple sclerosis, but this book isn't about MS. It's about an “inspired adaptation,” as one critic puts it. “The aim is the creation of joy.”

Fierce Attachments, by Vivian Gornick. A blistering memoir of a dysfunctional mother-daughter relationship and the beauty of intimate rage.

Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl, by Anne Frank. The haunting and triumphant journal of a 13-year-old girl whose family is forced into hiding from the Gestapo.

My Father's House, by Sylvia Fraser. A story of incest, violation of trust, and healing that will give you renewed respect for the resilience of the human spirit.

The Loony-Bin Trip, by Kate Millett. A memoir about a 13-year period in Millett's life when she was diagnosed as psychotic, institutionalized, and drugged.

Still Loved by the Sun: A Rape Survivor's Journal, Migael Scherer. A woman's story of going through and beyond rape.

I know Why the Caged Bird Sings, by Maya Angelou. A memoir of pain, self-discovery, and joy.

The Autobiography of a Face, by Lucy Grealy. Literally, a book about defacement, a wrenching experience for a young girl, who must grow up with the challenge of being imperfect in a world that values physical beauty.

Survival Stories: Memoirs of Crisis, ed. by Kathryn Rhett. A collection of personal essays (includes some men's stories as well) by well-known writers, describing the losses that brought them to life.



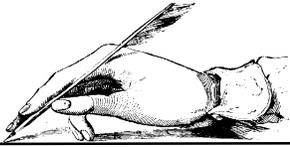
Looking Ahead

Each issue of the *SCJ* is loosely organized around a particular theme. We urge you to submit your brief essays, poetry, and book reviews on these themes, as well as your favorite women's quotations. But we also invite your non-theme writing, so please share! Send for our Writers' Guidelines.

May, 1998—Minding My Own Business: Writing about Work (deadline 4/1/98)

August, 1998—Life With Father (deadline 7/1/98)

November, 1998—Soul Foods (deadline 10/1/98)



Dear Pen

Here are several writers seeking women for an exchange of letters. We hope you will find many friends and have a long and fruitful correspondence. Keep us posted! We will run this column every issue that we have pen partner names to offer. Are you on e-mail? Include your e-mail address. Maybe we can get some virtual e-Circles going!

Nellie Ruby is a contributor to the “True Words from Real Women” section of *The Story Circle Journal*. Here is a paragraph of her story. To find out more, write to her at R.D. #1 Box 321, Whipple OH 45788.

“I was born in April 1942. I work for a dentist. I have loved writing since I was six. I live on a farm mainly made up of woods. We have wild turkeys and deer that enjoy roaming the yard and an occasional coyote passes by. I love feeding the birds. We camp, hike, bike, canoe, and are Civil War buffs. I hate winter and snow! We also enjoy photography and of course I love to write. We have three dogs and five cats. I am a widow, I have no children or family left. I never had any brothers or sisters.”

If you write to Nellie, ask her to share some of her poetry with you. And get her to tell you about the day her great grandmother Olivia died. (Now, that’s a story!)



Barbara Karachalios is recovering from a move (we all know how that feels!) and is just now getting settled. You can write to her at her new home, 4431 Taney Avenue #403, Alexandria VA 22304. You’ll find a paragraph from Barbara in the “Readers Write” column on page 15. Additionally, she says:

“It has been a very busy time with my writing and journalkeeping...Leaving behind dear friends and fellow journalkeepers was very difficult and I miss them and the group very much. We were delighted with the move to the east coast, but I have not been able to find anyone in this area so far who is even remotely interested in story circles, journalkeeping or writing of any kind!”

It’s always hard to make new connections, Barbara. Sounds like a pen partner is just the thing you need! And when the time is right for you, your new writing friends will appear. Christina Baldwin suggests writing down the kind of friendships you’d like to establish: this might help to make them a reality. (It’s worked for us!)

Diane Lodge-Peters (Rt. 1 Box 415, Evergreen AL 36401) is a Texas transplant to Alabama—we knew her years ago (decades is more like it!). She tells us:

Mainly I’m interested in writing stories that honor one’s ancestors. Thus far, my stories in this vein have been prose, but suddenly I’ve awakened to the notion that, for me, poetry must also have a narrative thread as well as an aural-oral dimension: I like it when a poem sings a story out loud inside my head. And my quest for an authentic voice seems anymore to depend on capturing the voices of my grandmothers.

Thank you, Diane. It’s great to reconnect with you after all this time! Pen partners, Diane’s cheerful notes will brighten your day.

A friend doesn’t go on a diet because you are fat. A friend never defends a husband who gets his wife an electric skillet for her birthday. A friend will tell you she saw your old boyfriend—and he’s a priest!—Erma Bombeck

Good communication is as stimulating as black coffee, and just as hard to sleep after.—Anne Morrow Lindbergh

*On the road between the homes of friends, grass does not grow.
—Norwegian proverb*

There is space within sisterhood for likeness and difference, for the subtle differences that challenge and delight; there is space for disappointment—and surprise.—Christine Downing

...It is that my friends have made the story of my life. In a thousand ways, they have turned my limitations into beautiful privileges, and enabled me to walk serene and happy in the shadow cast by my deprivation.—Helen Keller

Readers' Favorite Books

Are you writing your own story? Your work will be enriched and your experience deepened by reading the stories of other women. If you have discovered some particularly helpful books, we invite you to share the titles and authors' names with us, so that we can add them to our libraries, as well.

This list comes from Ruth Graber, of Boston. "I'm eclectic," Ruth says. "I collect authors the way other people collect stones. When I find somebody I like, I read as much as I can of their work. These days, I read mostly women. I want to know how women see and feel and taste things."

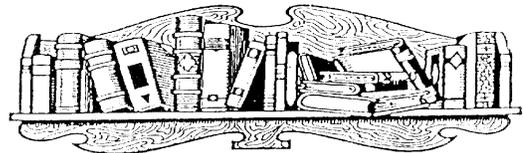
A Natural History of the Senses, Diane Ackerman
Of Love and Shadows, Isabel Allende
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou
Blackberry Winter: My Earlier Years, Margaret Mead
Composing a Life, Mary Catherine Bateson
The Other Mother, Carol Schaefer
A Mom's Life, Kathryn Grody
All But the Waltz: A Memoir of Five Generations in the Life of a Montana Family, Mary Clearman Blew
Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells, Ida B. Wells, ed by Alfreda M. Duster
A Daughter's Memoir, Sissela Bok
An American Childhood, Annie Dillard
Out of Africa, Isak Dinesen
Writing a Woman's Life, Carolyn Heilbrun
My Place, Sally Morgan

Sarah Manning, from Minneapolis, sent this list. "My mom and sisters and I trade books. Here are a few of our favorites."

The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts, Maxine Hong Kingston
In My Mother's House, Kim Chernin
A Country Year: Living the Questions, Sue Hubbell
Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place, Terry Tempest Williams
Changes in Latitude, Joana McIntyre Varawa
A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary 1785-1812, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich

For more books about women's lives, visit us at:

www.storycircle.org



Reading Women's Lives: A Reading Circle You Can Join

"The most important thing one woman can do for another is to illuminate and expand her sense of actual possibilities."—Adrienne Rich

At Story Circle, we believe that the most important thing we can do for each other is to share our women's stories. Here is a list of the books we will be reading and discussing in our Reading Circle in Austin TX over the next six months (see Roundup, p. 14). We invite you to read with us and send your notes, thoughts, and questions to be shared with other members of the Circle. We also hope to have something to share with you: a page of our thoughts and perceptions about the book and our discussion of it. If you're interested in joining us by mail or email, please drop us a note, and include a stamped self-addressed #10 envelope: Reading Circle, PO Drawer M, Bertram TX 78605 (email: china@tstar.net)

A Country Year: Living the Questions, Sue Hubbell (March 4)
An Unknown Woman, by Alice Koller (April 8)
Waist-High in the World, Nancy Mairs (May 6)
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou (June 3)
House by the Sea, May Sarton (July 1)
Prairie Reunion, by Barbara Scot (August 5)

True Words from Real Women

In this section of each Story Circle Journal, we publish your contributions of poetry and prose. Write for our Writers' Guidelines, limber up your pen (or your computer), and send in your submissions. We want to hear your story!

The Blessing

Our hands scatter the gravel, the kind you see at the bottom of an aquarium tank. Back and forth our arms move. My fingers feel the blue, coral, and yellow bits slipping through them.

I had begun to make a line of blue around the edge of the grave. Mom says, "No, do it like you are scattering chicken feed." I see immediately that she is right. I am trying to define the space, somehow create a boundary that protects. I reach into the bag and grasp the color. My arm sweeps wide. Loosening my fingers, letting go, I bless my dear sister. I remember the many ways she blessed me.

Linda walked the earth in a colorful way. I remember her ecstasy over the most ordinary beauty. In her wisdom, she saw the extraordinary. She could spot a tiny, blooming flower, or a special stone that spoke to her after everyone else had walked past, not hearing the song of color. Her large brown doe eyes sparkled at the visions before her. My heart leaps with the hope that she somehow knows I remember.

Our bags empty, fingers stained periwinkle blue, Mom and I stand back. We smile and we weep. Yes, Linda would like this spectacle of color. She approves. I am still learning from her.

Mom says that the rain will probably wash it away. I agree. We laugh. We will buy more, and perhaps some violet next time. I am truly blessed.

My sister Linda died at the age of 46 on August 6, 1997. She died suddenly, with little warning. We had had a brief year together after a long separation. I had no contact with my family from 1990-1996. I had lived those years misdiagnosed in a mental health system that almost cost me my life and all those dear to me. In 1988 through 1999, myself, my children, and my extended family were healing our collective, severe early childhood trauma. Our souls wept. The devastation was deep.

Sorrow and loss are part of my story. I experience the grief, the pain, and the healing as a commonality I share with all of humankind. I believe we walk this earth connected in spirit and soul to one another and to that which has created the ALL. Choosing to forgive in love—to choose love no matter what—to remember who I AM—this is my blessing. Blessed am I because of it all and in spite of it all.

Joyce Lyle
(Sat Nam, or *True Identity*)
Austin TX

To Sarah (3)

I was told at least a million times about my birth
your hard labor
my father's tears because of the pain you bore
I refused to come and when I did
I voiced my dislike
for all those things around

The day you died it snowed in feet
the drifts reached chest high
it was being called "a major winter storm"
I called it my personal white hell

Like the pain you bore to bring me here
I was in labor now
I bore the pain of saying goodbye

It was fitting for us to share it alone
in the house where you had spent your life

You labored to stay with me
as I had to stay with you
when you left
a calm closed in around the house
as the angels took you home

I felt an emptiness like I had never felt before
I will always hate the snow!

Nellie Hufford Ruby
Whipple, OH

Out of the Fire

I gave my heart to the burning
like the cauterization of a fresh raw wound.

Sometimes we go willingly
where we could not be dragged.

Now I see what has come of it.
Fresh green life
out of the fire.

R. Jamison
San Diego



A writer's imagination must be like that: full not just with literal truths, but with the unseen, the unknown whose shy presence is felt—Gretel Ehrlich

“How does it feel to have fire enter you?” another friend asked after hearing of my accident. I had no answer. Nothing of the incident remained in my retrievable memory. All the cultural references I knew showed gods throwing lightning bolts, not ingesting them, but like the young fire-eaters I’d seen as a child, stationed on the sidewalks of the Paseo de la Reforma in Mexico City, I had swallowed fire.—GE

Takashi, a farmer-monk from southern Japan who visited me at the beach house, said, “You have always been so strong. Now it is time to learn about being weak. This is necessary for you.”I pondered the dampening of the forceful energy, which had always welled up inside me. How does one do such a thing and not ask for death in the process? But that was the point: I didn’t have to do anything. There was still a lot I had to learn about getting well.—GE

Books for the Journey

In each issue, we’ll review one or more books that teach us something important about women’s stories. Some will be related to the theme of the issue, others will simply be books we couldn’t resist. If you would like to contribute, write for our Reviewers Guide.—Susan Albert

A Match to the Heart: One Woman’s Story of Being Struck by Lightning, by Gretel Ehrlich (Penguin, 1995, ISBN 0-14-017937-2, \$10.95)

This stunning book is about a woman who was struck by a bolt from the blue and lived to learn from it—and to teach others what she has learned. As a story, the plot is really very simple: a woman is walking with her dogs on her Wyoming ranch when she is struck by lightning. Gravely, almost fatally injured, she begins a two-year battle back to health, helped by parents, friends, a doctor, and a dog.

But this almost surreal plot, compelling as it is, is not the most fascinating aspect of this quite remarkable book. What happens when you’re struck by lightning? Here is how Ehrlich tells it:

I woke in a pool of blood, lying on my stomach some distance from where I should have been, flung at an odd angle to one side of the dirt path. The whole sky had grown dark. Was it evening, and if so, which one? How many minutes or hours had elapsed since I lost consciousness, and where were the dogs? I tried to call out to them but my voice didn’t work. The muscles in my throat were paralyzed and I couldn’t swallow. Were the dogs dead? Everything was terribly wrong. I had trouble seeing, talking, breathing, and I couldn’t move my legs or right arm. Nothing remained in my memory—no sounds, flashes, smells, no warnings of any kind...When thunder exploded over me, I knew I had been hit by lightning.

You might search through all of the books published in the last ten years and not find a more compelling opening. If you’re able to put this book down after these electric paragraphs, Dear Reader, you’re a better woman than I am!

If lightning had been searching for someone to tell the story of being struck by lightning, it could not have found a better spokeswoman than Gretel Ehrlich. For one thing, this wasn’t the first time Ehrlich had been struck. Years before, riding her horse in the high country, a ball of lightning had rolled across a meadow, surged up the legs of her horse, and coursed through her. “To be struck again—and this time it was a direct hit,” she writes. “What did it mean?” For another, Ehrlich is a nature writer with a clear, unsentimental eye and a strong voice. When this life-changing event occurred in 1991, she had been writing full time for twelve years. Her outstanding work had already been published in *The New York Times*, *LIFE Magazine*, *The Atlantic*, *Harper’s*, and *New Age Journal*, and she was the author of several books: *The Solace of Open Spaces* (1986), *Heart Mountain* (1989), *City Tales* (1986). It’s impossible to escape the idea that this lightning strike was inevitable and—in some sense that none of us can quite grasp—intentional.

continued on page 13

*Books for the Journey—*from page 13

That's how it must have seemed to Ehrlich, as well. She spent the next months on the brink of death, her nervous system seared almost beyond repair, trying to find a doctor who knew enough about the effects of electrocution to help her heal. That part of her search was facilitated by her parents, who took her to California and located an extraordinarily caring cardiologist who began to work with her. With his help, Ehrlich begins to understand the physical consequences of a lightning strike. As a reader, I was fascinated with this aspect of her experience: what happens in the heart, in the brain, and throughout the body when millions of volts of electricity surge through the human system, short-circuiting the delicate human network. Her need to know became so strong that it later led her to witness open-heart surgery, to become a "traveler, a Marco Polo who had arrived in a place so exotic, few had seen it before."

In her effort to satisfy this compelling need to understand and explain, Ehrlich explores the phenomenon from all angles. She studies the thunderstorms "that keep the global circuits going." She talks with others who have been similarly injured and found a growing network of survivors. She attends a conference and listens to the stories of 65 others, many far more disabled than she, all committed to the need to share, to transform society's ignorance about the dangers of electrical shock. Afterward, she reflects on "those humans who had awakened after being hit and became shamans and healers, and wondered what this new life of mine would be, carved from a ruined body and a ruined marriage, and what special passageways I could hollow out as in a labyrinth of dead ends."

Lightning always follows the path of least resistance, Ehrlich says. It certainly struck her when she was most vulnerable. Separated and preparing for divorce, she was about to leave the ranch she had loved and worked for fifteen years. Her efforts to recover from the lightning strike took her to California, where she spent a year living in Santa Barbara. As she points out, it was an uncanny coincidence: the city is named for a woman whose murderer was struck by lightning, and who later became a saint, the protectress of those threatened by lightning and fire. With her was her dog Sam, who had also been struck, and whose devoted love carried her through the darkest hours of the next few years. "The role of supernatural helpers—guides, ferrymen, or harnessed dogs—stands for the guardian who carries the human spirit forward, whether from death back to life or the other way around....Sam is my guide, my Virgil through these never-ending gaps...that seem to lie before me."

Like those others who became "shamans and healers" after their lightning strike, Ehrlich comes to her own awakening, understanding and valuing in new ways the fragile but durable body in which we all live this human life. And for her, as for many of us, it is the writing process itself that becomes the vehicle for enlightenment. If you are looking for a story of true grace under fire, you must read this. And if you are writing your own story about a shattering life-crisis, you must *really* read this. It will show you how to go deeply into the experience without being swallowed by it, how to explore the pain without being consumed by it, and how to open the wound and see the beauty of it.—
Susan Albert

To think about thinking is memory in the act of self-creation, causing a new dendritic shape to form inside the brain's circuitry. To ponder the workings of the nervous system—how mental events occur, the infrastructure of memory—is to think about the geography of the psyche. How do we get from a simple, universal electrical signal to a rich conceptual world of imagination, association, and intellect that seems to flow seamlessly as one stream of continual experience?—GE

New Year's morning I stood on rocks and burned a photograph of a man who had jilted me but to whom I clung as a friend out of hope that his affections would rekindle and fear that I would end up alone. It was not him I was burning but my own habit of attachment....Having risen from my own ashes several times, I found there was still more burning to do, more fresh starts to make....—GE

I knew that the traveler must dissolve nostalgic threads of personal history and go ahead with no baggage, no determined route: that the so-called hero is one who has mastered her own dissolution; that she's not a conquerer but a surrenderer...—GE

Survival is as much a matter of grace as fight. The expression "grace under pressure" implies the attainment of equanimity and equilibrium. The fundamental durability of the human body surprises us because the pain can be so intense—yet pain is often transient and hides the tremendous efforts the body is engaged in to heal itself.—GE

How fragile death is; how easily it opens back into life.—GE

A Story Circle News Roundup

Good stories have the power to save us.... We can all make a difference by simply sharing our stories with real people in real times and places.—*Mary Pipher*

Story Circles come in all sizes, from an intimate and informal gathering of friends over coffee and notebooks to the larger, more formal organization of a class. Whether your group is large or small, we would love to hear from you. Drop us a note and tell us where you're located, what you are doing, and what you have learned from your Story Circle work. Please give a name, address, and phone number of a contact, so that others may get in touch. Remember: a story about your experience in a Story Circle will help someone else imagine herself in a Story Circle—perhaps one that she has created herself, with your example to guide her and your encouragement to inspire her! Also remember: Story Circles qualify for quantity discount on Writing From Life and free copies of The Story Circle Journal. Write to us for details.

This issue, we'd like to tell you about the Story Circle classes and workshops we're offering here in Austin TX. You may not be able to attend (some activities will in fact be over by the time you receive the newsletter), but these descriptions may give you some ideas for Story Circle programs within your own community. For information on our on-going Austin programs, write for an updated program brochure to Story Circle Network, 1209 Wilson Heights Dr., Austin TX 78746, or phone 512-306-0964.

Life is a Spiritual Journey (7-9 p.m. Feb. 4, 11, 18, 25. Cost \$40) This course is offered to women who are interested in exploring their spiritual journey and understanding it as an essential part of their life story. Through silence, art, music, writing, and reflecting on their experiences, participants will explore the on-going spiritual dimensions of their lives. Since each life flows from a past through a present toward a future, participants will be invited to claim their unique experiences and discover ways of expressing them. Facilitators: Hannah O'Donoghue and Jean Springer.

Journaling Workshop. (7-9 p.m. March 5, 12, 19, 26. Cost \$40) Journaling is a powerful tool for communicating more deeply with ourselves and others. Using established and newly developed techniques, workshop facilitators will guide participants in exploring their inner archetypes and other unexpressed voices. This workshop will be an opportunity for beginning and experienced journal writers to share and practice flow writing, dialogue writing, and other forms of journal writing, in order to capture the daily stories of their lives, explore unacknowledged patterns, and find their own wisdom voices. Facilitators: Sara Gaertner and Eleanor Jordan.

Reading Women's Lives: A Reading Circle (11:15 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. on the 1st Wednesday of each month. Cost \$60/6 months) Women's stories are a remarkable resource that can show us how life might be lived, and how we can use other women's experience to enrich and enlarge our own. This mid-day reading group will meet monthly to read and discuss women's memoirs, journals, and life stories. We will be reading such writers as Alice Koller, May Sarton, Nancy Mairs, Vivian Gornick, Mary Cantwell, Maya Angelou, Kathleen Norris, and others. Facilitated by Susan Wittig Albert.

Capturing Memories: A Scrapbook Workshop. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Feb. 21. Cost \$50 plus \$10 materials charge.) For centuries, women have captured intimate memories and celebrated family milestones in personal scrapbooks, often handed down from mother to daughter. Using materials they have brought and those provided for the workshop, participants will design, create, and share original pages for their heirloom scrapbooks. Facilitator: Kathie Giltinan.

Creating Your Own Story Circle. (7-8:30 date TBA. Cost \$5) A Story Circle is a group of women who come together to write life-stories and to share their life-explorations with others. If you would like to facilitate a Story Circle, we welcome you to this evening of discussion. We will talk about why Story Circles are important, who might be involved, what kinds of activities help to develop a creative environment for writing and sharing, and how you might go about organizing a group in your church, women's organization, or community. Facilitators: Carol Abbassi, Susan Wittig Albert.

Last issue, we gave the wrong name for the facilitator of this group. Elizabeth, our apologies! We'll try again.

In Austin TX, Elizabeth Davis facilitates a group called Sanctuary: A Story Circle for Women. In her flyer, she writes:

"This workshop is an invitation to explore in the quietness of your heart—and with other women—questions about yourself that no one (including yourself) may have asked you. The topics are simple. The power comes from the energy of fresh and honest writing, then sharing that electric moment (if you so choose) in the sanctuary of a circle of other women also writing from the wellsprings of their lives." In a note, she added: "We've extended the group to twelve sessions. We had a powerful session on menopause (with women of all ages) last week. Thanks again for pioneering this path for deep soul work."

For information about Sanctuary, you may reach Elizabeth at 512-450-0009.

Visit our web site!
www.storycircle.org

Our Readers Share Their Stories....



Barbara Driskill from New Holstein WI, writes, "I am a retired elementary and special education teacher. I have enjoyed writing about my travels and teaching overseas...several articles of mine appeared in Arthritis Today...Keep up the good work. I enjoy your publication."

Thanks, Barbara! We're glad to have you with us.

From **Violet M. Funston** comes this note. "I have recently written my autobiography. Title: "My First 86 Years." It was edited by my daughter, who is Head of the English Department at Uright College in Chicago. I have had it printed, 68 pages, typing paper size, with many pictures. I am hoping this journal will help me to market it."

By self-publishing your book, you have already made it available for marketing, Violet. One suggestion: be sure that you let all the organizations you belong to know about your new book. Most self-publishers say that the most important thing is to network, network, network. In future issues, we hope to have articles about writing for publication, self-publishing, and marketing self-published memoirs—all very interesting topics to many of our readers!

Barbara Karachalios, who recently moved to Alexandria VA, tells us about herself: "I am a prolific freelance writer of inspirational stories, anecdotes, endless journals and poetry dealing primarily with families, parenting, personal values, and children. My works have appeared in *The Saturday Evening Post, Sunshine, Living With Preschoolers, Home Life, The Villager, Live, Parents & Kids, Standard, The Writer's Journal, The Family*, and numerous poetry volumes through the United States and abroad. Having traveled and lived extensively throughout the world and observed many different cultures as they compare/contrast to our own, my focus always seems to return to those I know and love the most—my exceptional children and family and all of life's lessons that we have learned together...I also love doing creative memory albums...which chronicle the stories and special occasions in our lives. I also love creating and using *theme* and *self-discovery* journals in which I not only write but affix things in them that "speak" to me."

An impressive list of publications, Barbara! We also like your ideas for different journals. Pen Pal alert: Barbara's name is on the list!

This comes from **Erin Philbin Boyle**, of

Pittsburgh PA. "I was born into a loving family—the fourth of five daughters. I am a wife and a mother to a two-and-a-half -year old son. I work in a rehabilitation hospital as a speech-language pathologist. I'm becoming increasingly interested in alternative forms of storytelling, such as quilts and needlework."

So are we, Erin. We hope to have features on these topics in later newsletters. We're glad you've joined us.

Jane Brighton from the Chicago area writes this: "I want to write my story—but not for publication. In my life, it feels like everything is all tangled up, mixed up, confused. Writing down the story of my life has helped to clarify it and sort out some of the tangles. But it's just for me and my closest friends, not for anybody else.

I often tell my writing students that we have to write for ourselves first before we can write for other people. Getting things sorted out, understanding the significance of events in our lives—that's comes first, before we begin to think about sharing our writing with strangers. I'm glad to know that you're aiming your work at your most important audience: yourself!—Susan Albert

This membership is a gift.
My name and address:

Please send me ____ free copies of the *Story Circle* brochure to share with friends and clients.

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One year, USA \$20; Canada & Mexico, \$26; Elsewhere, \$30

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Mail to Story Circle Network, P.O. Drawer M, Bertram TX 78605

Telling The Soul's Story ***A Story Circle Weekend Workshop***

with Susan Wittig Albert
and members of the Story Circle Network

Women are natural storytellers, sharing their experiences of work and love, children and challenge, bright hours and dark days. But while a woman's life is a story worth telling, writing a life has been the privilege of men. In this 9-hour weekend workshop, you will learn why and how storytelling can be an important means of self-discovery, self-determination, and transformation. With the other women in this workshop, participants will discover

why we *must* tell our stories
why personal narrative is a healing art
how our stories can be sacred acts
how writing the story of our past can help us define a healthy future

Using the techniques described in Susan Wittig Albert's book, ***Writing From Life: Telling the Soul's Story***, participants will learn how to create their own personal memoirs. Susan and other members of the Story Circle Network will lead the group in a variety of life-writing exercises on three different topics. These will include

Passionate Attachments: A History of the Heart
A Closet of Memories: Who We Were and What We Wore
Home Cooking: Soul Foods

When: Friday May 22, 7-9:30 p.m. and Saturday May 23, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Where: Lower Colorado River Authority Complex, 3701 Lake Austin Blvd., Austin TX

Cost: \$60. A full refund will be made for cancellations prior to May 8. Susan Albert's book is not required, but may be purchased at a discount at the workshop.

To register before May 8: mail check to Story Circle, PO Drawer M, Bertram TX 78605. Enrollment is limited, so please register early. **Late registration,** ph 512-306-0964.

For out-of-town participants: Austin offers many hotels, cultural activities, and natural delights. For tourist information, phone the Austin Tourist Information Center, 512-478-009

Workshop Registration Form

Enclosed is my check for \$60.00. I would like to register for ***Telling The Soul's Story***, to be held May 22-23, 1998.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____ email _____

Mail to Story Circle Network, PO Drawer M, Bertram TX 78605