



From Where You Dream: The Process of Writing Fiction

By Robert Olen Butler

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From Where You Dream: The Process of Writing Fiction By Robert Olen Butler

Robert Olen Butler, winner of the Pulitzer Prize in Fiction, teaches graduate fiction at Florida State University — his version of literary boot camp. In *From Where You Dream*, Butler reimagines the process of writing as emotional rather than intellectual, and tells writers how to achieve the dreamspace necessary for composing honest, inspired fiction. Proposing that fiction is the exploration of the human condition with yearning as its compass, Butler reinterprets the traditional tools of the craft using the dynamics of desire. Offering a direct view into the mind and craft of a literary master, *From Where You Dream* is an invaluable tool for the novice and experienced writer alike.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Pulitzer-winning novelist Butler (*Had a Good Time*, etc.) teaches a creative writing class at known as "boot camp" because of the intense creative demands he places on students. This series of lectures (edited by Burroway, a graduate of the class) deftly conveys the intensity of the class as Butler exhorts students to get out of their heads and into the world of the senses ("Artists are not intellectuals. We are sensualists..."), which he posits as the seat of the emotions. Butler's emphasis on sense memories recalls Method acting, and like Stanislavsky, Butler most highly values work with deep emotional connections and rich "organic coherence" at every level. Identify your character's yearning, he says: plot "represents the dynamics of desire." Butler has little to offer anyone hoping to write the sort of commercial fiction he regards as "non-literature." But in illuminating his approach to fiction, Butler can be equally hard on his own work, and discusses various issues by analyzing its faults—for instance, that good dialogue isn't expository, it has subtext. To illustrate his positive points, he draws on works ranging from Margaret Atwood's to the Old Testament. The book also features works by students and thoughtful class discussions of them, and closes with Butler's story "Open Arms," discussed in earlier sections. Butler shares his insights into—and passion for—the creation and experience of fiction with total openness, and seriously aspiring writers should receive this text/manifesto in the same light. *Agent, Kim Witherspoon. (Apr.)*

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From [Booklist](#)

There's no doubt that Pulitzer Prize winner Butler, whose many fictional works include *Had a Good Time* [BKL My 1 04], knows how to write literary fiction, and it comes as no surprise that his approach to teaching fiction writing is intense, given the venturesome nature of his work. Butler taped his lectures, thus preserving their dynamism, and the edited result is a remarkably candid, clarifying, and profoundly demanding how-to. Butler's credo is, "Art does not come from the mind. Art comes from the place where we dream."

Consequently, he teaches wanna-be fiction writers not how to brainstorm but how to "dreamstorm," and explains why fiction must be rooted in sensual experience, how cinematic techniques create narrative flow, and how "yearning" must be the driving force in every story. Butler's electrifying theories are backed by illuminating examples and startling practices (you'll never look at index cards in the same way again).

Incisive and provocative, Butler's tutorials are a must for anyone even thinking about writing fiction, and readers, too, will benefit from his passionate exhortations. *Donna Seaman*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Kelly Watson:

Nowadays reading books become more and more than want or need but also turn into a life style. This reading addiction give you lot of advantages. Advantages you got of course the knowledge even the information inside the book in which improve your knowledge and information. The knowledge you get based on what kind of book you read, if you want have more knowledge just go with education and learning books but if you want really feel happy read one with theme for entertaining like comic or novel. The particular From Where You Dream: The Process of Writing Fiction is kind of reserve which is giving the

reader unforeseen experience.

Ebony Thornton:

From Where You Dream: The Process of Writing Fiction can be one of your beginner books that are good idea. Most of us recommend that straight away because this reserve has good vocabulary that may increase your knowledge in vocabulary, easy to understand, bit entertaining but still delivering the information. The article writer giving his/her effort to place every word into satisfaction arrangement in writing From Where You Dream: The Process of Writing Fiction however doesn't forget the main place, giving the reader the hottest in addition to based confirm resource details that maybe you can be certainly one of it. This great information can drawn you into fresh stage of crucial thinking.

Betty Borgen:

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Phillip Chadwick:

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