

Writing from the Body

with

Amanda Hale

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A friendly and informal writing group led by published novelist, Amanda Hale; for those who have always wanted to write but don't know where to start, and for writers who are stuck and need a jump-start.

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Through a series of writing exercises designed to enliven memory and focus on selective narrative, participants will be encouraged to move beyond fears and blocks into a celebration of written expression. "Writing from the Body" is a journey in personal discovery, offering a supportive environment in which to rediscover your creative abilities. There will be opportunities to share your work with the group, but no pressure to do so. No previous experience necessary.

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***Amanda Hale** has been writing for over 30 years. She is a published novelist and poet, has written for theatre and worked as a journalist. She has taught creative writing at University level and in Continuing Ed. Her first novel, **Sounding the Blood**, was published by **Raincoast Books** in 2001. It was a finalist for the BC Relit Awards and was voted one of the Top Ten novels of 2001 by Toronto's *Now Magazine*. Her second novel, **The Reddening Path**, published by **ThistleDown Press** in Spring 2007, is currently being translated into Spanish for a Spring 2008 release.*

Writing from the Body: The Journey

The primary objective of Writing from the Body is to reclaim the childhood activity of creativity for its own sake. As small children we paint, sing, dance, play, entirely in the moment, without any thought of judgement or reward. As the critic is encountered and internalized we learn to both refine and censor our words and actions. For many of us this inner critic becomes our master rather than our servant, and we are to a great extent silenced and immobilized creatively. Creativity becomes a risk.

The first part of our journey involves **getting to know our inner critic**, owning it, and making an alliance with her/him. We move toward an agreement with our critic to stand back for the moment and allow us freedom of expression during the workshop.

Now we move on to **the discovery of our essential story**. The journey here is inward; an exploration to search for the stories which are hidden, secret, taboo, and as such hold enormous power over us, often without our realization. As we begin to discover the wealth locked up in our bodies and to share images and memories in story form, we experience our commonality and the joy of bringing our essential stories up into the light.

The next step involves **characters**. We write character sketches; we delve into family ancestry; we explore both magnetic and unattractive characters, monitoring throughout the facets of ourselves which are involved, the fascination of the merging of the fragmented world of character into a pattern of human commonality.

The final phase of the journey is a re-emergence into the world of **mystery and discovery**. We work with magical powers, with beauty and wildness, we track animals and name our angels. In other words we return from our exploration having reclaimed an essential part of ourselves that can enable us to write and speak out with a freedom similar to that we experienced in early childhood.

These workshops are about process, aimed at getting your pen moving. It is up to the individual to apply the freedom gained in Writing from the Body to her/his own writing in alliance with the inner critic/editor. The next step for many people is to form their own writing group. Equipped with a structured set of writing exercises writers are able to continue the journey of discovery, refreshing memory with deeper exploration.

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