



A Story Larger than My Own: Women Writers Look Back on Their Lives and Careers

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In 1955, Maxine Kumin submitted a poem to the *Saturday Evening Post*. “Lines on a Half-Painted House” made it into the magazine—but not before Kumin was asked to produce, via her husband’s employer, verification that the poem was her original work.

Kumin, who went on to win the Pulitzer Prize for poetry, was part of a groundbreaking generation of women writers who came of age during the midcentury feminist movement. By challenging the status quo and ultimately finding success for themselves, they paved the way for future generations of writers. In *A Story Larger than My Own*, Janet Burroway brings together Kumin, Julia Alvarez, Jane Smiley, Erica Jong, and fifteen other accomplished women of this generation to reflect on their writing lives.

The essays and poems featured in this collection illustrate that even writers who achieve critical and commercial success experience a familiar pattern of highs and lows over the course of their careers. Along with success comes the pressure to sustain it, as well as a constant search for subject matter, all too frequent crises of confidence, the challenges of a changing publishing scene, and the difficulty of combining writing with the ordinary stuff of life—family, marriage, jobs. The contributors, all now over the age of sixty, also confront the effects of aging, with its paradoxical duality of new limitations and newfound freedom.

Taken together, these stories offer advice from experience to writers at all stages of their careers and serve as a collective memoir of a truly remarkable generation of women.

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