



To Show and to Tell: The Craft of Literary Nonfiction

By Phillip Lopate

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To Show and to Tell: The Craft of Literary Nonfiction By Phillip Lopate

A long-awaited new book on personal writing from Phillip Lopate—celebrated essayist, the director of Columbia University’s nonfiction program, and editor of *The Art of the Personal Essay*.

Distinguished author Phillip Lopate, editor of the celebrated anthology *The Art of the Personal Essay*, is universally acclaimed as “one of our best personal essayists” (*Dallas Morning News*). Here, combining more than forty years of lessons from his storied career as a writer and professor, he brings us this highly anticipated nuts-and-bolts guide to writing literary nonfiction. A phenomenal master class shaped by Lopate’s informative, accessible tone and immense gift for storytelling, *To Show and To Tell* reads like a long walk with a favorite professor—refreshing, insightful, and encouraging in often unexpected ways.

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Lopate, a consummate and piquant essayist and director of Columbia University's graduate nonfiction program, draws on his extensive teaching experience in this expert, anecdotal, funny, and frank guide to writing "intelligent, satisfying, engaging literary nonfiction." Even in a how-to book, Lopate can't help but write lithe and sparring personal essays, so we learn, for example, that he honed his chops as a ghostwriter. His sophisticated advice touches on psychological challenges as much as craft, such as when he names "self-hatred" as a "stumbling block" for writers, and, admitting his own audacity when writing about family and friends, instructs memoirists to be prepared to "accept the guilt" when people get upset. He also suggests developing a "tone of assertion." Lopate draws helpful comparisons with fiction, noting that nonfiction also requires conflict and the "art of characterization" but that its story line is a thought process. Never one to accept received wisdom, Lopate encourages writers to go beyond the safe, facile, and sentimental. To see him practice what he preaches, turn to his newest essay collection, *Portraits inside My Head*. --Donna Seaman

Review

"[To Show and To Tell] gives away all his trade secrets – a thoughtful guidebook for writers of literary nonfiction." (*New York Times Book Review*)

"One of the best guides to writing nonfiction I've read." (*The Cleveland Plain Dealer*)

"Sophisticated... Lopate, a consummate and piquant essayist,...draws on his extensive teaching experience in this expert, anecdotal, funny, and frank guide to writing "intelligent, satisfying, engaging literary nonfiction." Even in a how-to book, Lopate can't help but write lithe and sparring personal essays... Never one to accept received wisdom, Lopate encourages writers to go beyond the safe, facile, and sentimental." (*Booklist*)

"One of the Earls of Essay returns with a collection that illustrates both his knowledge of the genre and his considerable skill in practicing it... A useful collection of bracing thoughts and sinuous sentences." (*Kirkus Reviews*)

"At last--a reliable guide to the signature genre of the age. Phillip Lopate's tour of literary nonfiction includes brilliant and helpful considerations of the essay and memoir, placing them and their vexing questions in clear cultural context. Impossible now to imagine a nonfiction course that does not include *To Show and To Tell* in its syllabus. This is the rule book. But it's much more than a "craft book" for writers. It's a delight in itself, a fascinating exploration for readers, for anyone wondering why personally voiced nonfiction is so popular. The range is impressive, and the voice here is immediate, fresh, witty, winningly honest. An indispensable book." (Patricia Hampl *author of The Florist's Daughter*)

"Shrewd, revealing, dexterous, skeptical, provocative, restless, wry, necessary." (Laura Kipnis *author of Against Love and How to Become a Scandal*)

"The work of a master, *To Show and To Tell* is beyond compare, for it embodies a poetics of literary nonfiction that takes into account all the crucial aspects, elements, and issues of the craft. Thus it's the essential text for anyone who seeks to enjoy, to understand, or to write nonfiction." (Carl H. Klaus *author of*

The Made-Up Self: Impersonation in the Personal Essay)

About the Author

Phillip Lopate is the author of more than a dozen books, including three personal essay collections, *Bachelorhood*, *Against Joie de Vivre*, *Portrait of My Body*, and *Waterfront*. He directs the graduate nonfiction program at Columbia University and lives in Brooklyn with his wife and daughter.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Edna Miller:

Nowadays reading books become more than want or need but also work as a life style. This reading habit give you lot of advantages. The huge benefits you got of course the knowledge the actual information inside the book in which improve your knowledge and information. The knowledge you get based on what kind of publication you read, if you want get more knowledge just go with knowledge books but if you want truly feel happy read one with theme for entertaining for instance comic or novel. The actual To Show and to Tell: The Craft of Literary Nonfiction is kind of guide which is giving the reader unpredictable experience.

William Johnson:

Information is provisions for those to get better life, information presently can get by anyone on everywhere. The information can be a understanding or any news even an issue. What people must be consider any time those information which is inside the former life are difficult to be find than now could be taking seriously which one is suitable to believe or which one the resource are convinced. If you find the unstable resource then you have it as your main information there will be huge disadvantage for you. All those possibilities will not happen in you if you take To Show and to Tell: The Craft of Literary Nonfiction as the daily resource information.

Edward Upton:

Precisely why? Because this To Show and to Tell: The Craft of Literary Nonfiction is an unordinary book that the inside of the book waiting for you to snap the item but latter it will jolt you with the secret this inside. Reading this book next to it was fantastic author who else write the book in such incredible way makes the content on the inside easier to understand, entertaining way but still convey the meaning completely. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this any more or you going to regret it. This unique book will give you a lot of positive aspects than the other book get such as help improving your proficiency and your critical thinking way. So , still want to postpone having that book? If I have been you I will go to the publication store hurriedly.

Patrick Garcia:

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