



# The Making of a Story: A Norton Guide to Creative Writing

By Alice LaPlante

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**A *Los Angeles Times* bestseller: wonderfully lucid and illuminating, Alice LaPlante's guide to writing fiction "recalls Francine Prose's bestseller, *Reading Like a Writer*" (*Library Journal*).**

*The Making of a Story* is a fresh and inspiring guide to the basics of creative writing?both fiction and creative nonfiction. Its hands-on, completely accessible approach walks writers through each stage of the creative process, from the initial triggering idea to the revision of the final manuscript. It is unique in combining the three main aspects of creative writing instruction: process (finding inspiration, getting ideas on the page), craft (specific techniques like characterization), and anthology (learning by reading masters of the form). Succinct, clear definitions of basic terms of fiction are accompanied by examples, including excerpts from masterpieces of short fiction and essays as well as contemporary novels. A special highlight is Alice LaPlante's systematic debunking of many of the so-called rules of creative writing. This book is perfect for writers working alone as well as for creative writing classes, both introductory and advanced.

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### Editorial Review

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A writer and seasoned creative-writing teacher, LaPlante has assembled a treasury of materials to back up her literary expertise. In her discussion of metaphor, for example, LaPlante quotes Byron, Denis Johnson, Flannery O'Connor, Shakespeare, and William Gass. In her extrapolation of the old adage, "write about what you know," she presents a poem by Sharon Olds, a page from the journals of Leonard Michaels, and Eudora Welty's indelible advice: "Write about what you don't know about what you know." Comprehensive in its coverage of inspiration, craft, aesthetics, veracity, and purpose, this one-stop guide to writing is casual in tone and rigorous in content, elucidating the nature of fiction and nonfiction and clarifying the qualities unique to each and common to both. Each chapter contains an explication of such subjects as point of view, creating characters, and narrative structure; writing exercises, and an illustrative story by the likes of Tim O'Brien, ZZ Packer, Lorrie Moore, John Cheever, and Maxine Hong Kingston. Expansive, clear, and sophisticated, LaPlante's richly resourced guide is destined to become a standard. Seaman, Donna

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### About the Author

Alice LaPlante teaches creative writing at San Francisco State University and Stanford University, where she is a former Wallace Stegner Fellow. Her fiction has been published in the Southwest Review, Epoch, and Stanford Magazine, and her nonfiction has been published in Discover, BusinessWeek, and the San Jose Mercury News, among other publications. She lives in Palo Alto, California.

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**William Wright:**

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