



The Spooky Art: Some Thoughts on Writing

Norman Mailer

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“Writing is spooky. There is no routine of an office to keep you going, only the blank page each morning, and you never know where your words are coming from, those divine words.”

In **The Spooky Art**, Norman Mailer discusses with signature candor the rewards and trials of the writing life, and recommends the tools to navigate it. Addressing the reader in a conversational tone, he draws on the best of more than fifty years of his own criticism, advice, and detailed observations about the writer’s craft. Mailer explores, among other topics, the use of first person versus third person, the pressing need for discipline, the pitfalls of early success, and the dire matter of coping with bad reviews. While **The Spooky Art** offers a fascinating preview of what can lie in wait for the student and fledgling writer, the book also has a great deal to say to more advanced writers on the contrary demands of plot and character, the demon writer’s block, and the curious ins-and-outs of publishing. Throughout, Mailer ties in examples from his own career, and reflects on the works of his fellow writers, living and dead—Twain, Melville, Faulkner, Hemingway, Updike, Didion, Bellow, Styron, Beckett, and a host of others. In **The Spooky Art**, Mailer captures the unique untold suffering and exhilaration of the novelist’s daily life and, while plotting a clear path for other writers to follow, maintains reverence for the underlying mystery and power of the art.

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