



## Tell Me True: Memoir, History, and Writing a Life

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*"The memoir has been, on the one hand, a startling success story in American publishing in the past quarter century. But it has also been literature's changeling, the bad apple, ever suspect, slightly illegitimate, a brassy parvenu talking too much about itself." - Patricia Hampl, "You're History"*

Balancing precariously between history and literature, memoir writers have finally found their place on the bookshelf. But increased notoriety brings intense scrutiny: memoirists are expected to create a narrative worthy of fiction while also staying true to the facts. Historians, too, handle tricky issues of writing from "real life," when imagination must fill gaps in the historical record.

In this landmark collection, Patricia Hampl and Elaine Tyler May have gathered fourteen original essays from award-winning memoirists and historians. Whether the record emerges from archival sources or from personal memory, these writers show how to make the leap to telling a good story, while also telling us true.

**Contributors:** Andre Aciman, Matt Becker, June Cross, Carlos Eire, Helen Epstein, Samuel G Freedman, Patricia Hampl, Fenton Johnson, Alice Kaplan, Annette Kobak, Michael MacDonald, Elaine Tyler May, Cheri Register, D. J. Waldie

**Patricia Hampl** is the author of three memoirs, including most recently *The Florist's Daughter*. **Elaine Tyler May** has written several books on twentieth-century American history. Both are Regents Professors at the University of Minnesota.

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