



My First Novel

Alan Watt, Cheryl Strayed, Rick Moody, Aimee Bender, Janet Fitch, Jerry Stahl, David Ulin, Merrill Markoe, Dan Fante, Sheri Holman

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Have you ever wondered how your favorite authors got their start? How did they make the leap from closet scribe to published author? In *My First Novel: Tales of Woe and Glory*, twenty-five authors recount the variety of hurdles, both internal and external that they had to overcome on their journey. Alan Watt, editor of *My First Novel* and founder of L.A. Writers' Lab's 90-Day Novel Workshops, states, "The goal of this book was to demystify the creative experience, to level the playing field, to say to the writer who was struggling with his novel late at the night in the garage of his parent's house in Walla Walla, that you are no different than any of these other writers, and to keep going, and yes, at times it really is that difficult and scary, but that you are not alone, and you are up to the challenge, and here are twenty-five separate road maps to the same destination." Cheryl Strayed (author of the international bestseller, *Wild*) recounts her experience of writing her first novel, *Torch*. "I know this sounds crazy, but it's true: I thought that *Torch* would write itself. Or rather, that something magical would happen that would make it be written, a force that would take me into its grips and enable me to write a book without too much suffering." Rick Moody (award-winning author of *The Ice Storm*) writes, "For *Garden State*, it only mattered what I believed was true...Music taught me a lot of whatever I know about prose, about the way that prose should sound...after I finished *Garden State*, it was rejected by every publisher in New York." Aimee Bender, whose first book was the celebrated short story collection, *The Girl in the Flammable Skirt*, tells us, "The moral for me, is something like: work with what you have, not what you might have, or what the market wants. If there's a book that's done, that feels to you like a ready book, like a book tugging to leave the booknest, then push for that book, or at least try." *My First Novel: Tales and Woe and Glory*, is not a book about how to write; it is a book about why we write, and what makes us persist, and the reasons are as personal as they are universal." 100% of the proceeds from *My First Novel* are being donated to PEN Center USA's Emerging Voices Fellowship.

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