

Naked, Drunk, and Writing
Subtitle: Shed Your Inhibitions and Craft a Compelling Memoir or Personal Essay
By Adair Lara
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Take the Title as a First Lesson

Your First-Person Essay (Or Memoir), Your Book. Your Book Sales

Reviewed by Carolyn Howard-Johnson, award-winning author of *This Is the Place* and *Harkening: A Collection of Stories Remembered*, several chapbooks of poetry and the How To Do It Frugally series of books for writers.

I collect books on the writing and marketing of books. After reading and reviewing so many, I've found that some of the best lessons are those that teach by example. In the case of Adair Lara's new book--which is a bit about writers' block and a lot about craft--the first lesson I noticed was one about marketing. It was that great title. *Naked, Drunk, and Writing*. Naked is metaphorically what those who write memoirs must get. Yes, and maybe a little drunk, too.

The subtitle, *Shed Your Inhibitions and Craft a Compelling Memoir or Personal Essay*, explains what the reader may not get on first glance at the title. I liked that it has lots of searchable keywords that explanation of what the book. That very simple "writing" in the main title will help writers reaching for help on Amazon's search feature, too.

So, I'm a little off the subject. Maybe it's the way my brain works. Dunno.

I do know that if Adair were my teacher, she'd get after me for straying from a review of the book's content. Or, she would, at the very least, suggest I reconsider digressing. Being a teacher myself, I've stubbornly decided against a change on the grounds that my students and my blog and Web site visitors will learn something from my detour, and that they get a marketing lesson or two is almost always one of my goals.

Having excused away my tendency toward a tangent (I hope successfully), I also recommend *Naked and Drunk* for those writing their own stories. When I teach the marketing of books, I always find many in my class who don't know what a first-person essay is. So, to explain, I must digress (I have lots of practice in that, as you can see).

I'll be recommending this book to in my UCLA handout, for sure. No matter what an author's genre of choice, he or she will need the skills for a personal essay. Every author's media kit should include one. Therefore every author needs this book for the most practical of reasons. So they can get publicity. For it's publicity that will sell the memoir that Lara so capably teaches them to write.

PS: A note to Ten Speed Press: From a marketing standpoint, what would it hurt to include on the “Other Books by Adair Lara” page a little explanatory pitch about what her other books are about. Some have titles that are adorable, but are not upfront clear about what might be between the covers. Option two: Include the subtitles. We’re all going to want to know more about Lara.

Carolyn Howard-Johnson’s first novel, *This is the Place*, won eight awards. Her book of creative nonfiction *Harkening*, won three. A UCLA Writers' Program instructor, she also is the author of the multi award-winning *HowToDoItFrugally* series of books for writers. The second in that series, *The Frugal Editor: Put Your Best Book Forward to Avoid Humiliation and Ensure Success*, covers writing successful query letters and includes helpful hints from twenty of the nation's top literary agents. It can be purchased at Amazon. She admits to needing Lara’s book as she writes her own memoir. Learn more at her new site <http://HowToDoItFrugally.com>.