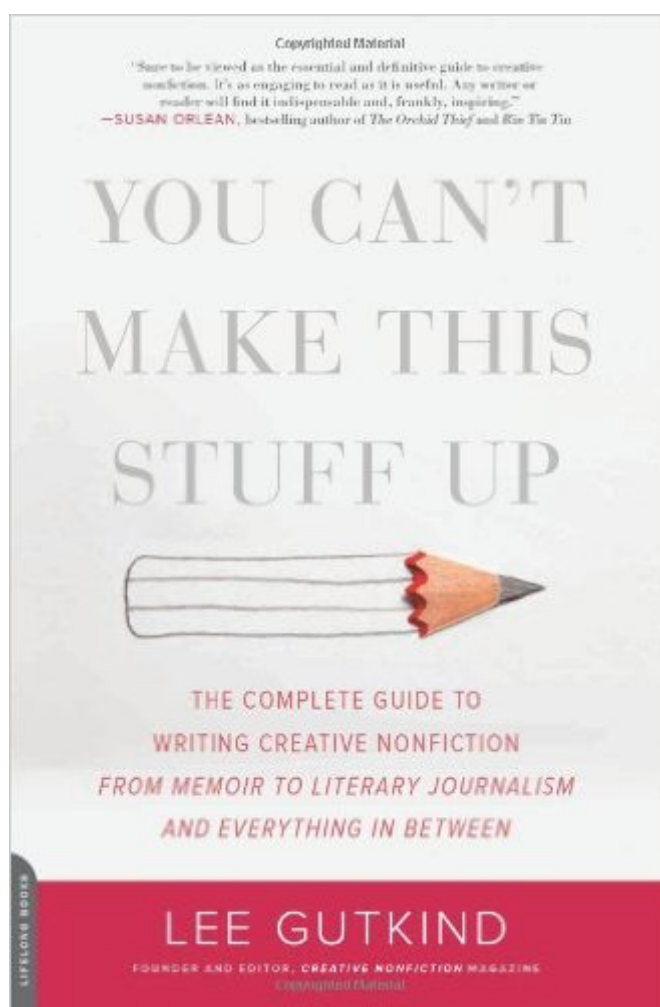


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# You Can't Make This Stuff Up: The Complete Guide To Writing Creative Nonfiction--from Memoir To Literary Journalism And Everything In Between



## Synopsis

From rags-to-riches-to-rags tell-alls to personal health sagas to literary journalism everyone seems to want to try their hand at creative nonfiction. Now, Lee Gutkind, the go-to expert for all things creative nonfiction, taps into one of the fastest-growing genres with this new writing guide. Frank and to-the-point, with depth and clarity, Gutkind describes and illustrates each and every aspect of the genre, from defining a concept and establishing a writing process to the final product. Offering new ways of understanding genre and invaluable tools for writers to learn and experiment with, *You Can't Make This Stuff Up* allows writers of all skill levels to thoroughly expand and stylize their work.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Creative nonfiction has become a hot commodity in recent years. It is "the fastest-growing genre in the literary and publishing worlds." An example is Rebecca Skloot's "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks," one of the outstanding books of 2010, in which Skloot explores the life of an

African-American woman whose cells are used all over the world for groundbreaking research. Lee Gutkind, author of "You Can't Make This Stuff Up," discusses works by Skloot and other outstanding writers to illustrate how evocative, moving, and profound creative nonfiction can be. A prolific author in his own right, Gutkind is the founder and editor of a magazine, "Creative Nonfiction." In "You Can't Make This Stuff Up," he defines creative non-fiction, talks about some of its "prime movers," and addresses the challenges inherent in writing an essay, article, memoir, or other full-length work

that is entertaining, stylish, memorable, and factually accurate. He emphasizes that there are "legal, ethical, and moral lines" that should not be crossed when writing creative nonfiction. Writers who "make stuff up" are often exposed, leading to reputations in ruins and careers that are ignominiously cut short. This well-constructed book features outstanding examples of creative nonfiction by Skloot, Gay Talese, Lauren Slater, and Eve Joseph. These pieces demonstrate how colorful characters, lively scenes, crisp dialogue, and good storytelling can draw us in, maintain our interest, and subtly reveal big truths. In the second part of "You Can't Make This Stuff Up," Gutkind offers aspiring writers sound advice on how to produce their own works of creative non-fiction. He talks about choosing a topic, conducting research, fact-checking, editing, setting up a narrative structure, and revision.

Disparaged in 1997 as the "godfather behind creative nonfiction" in a critical Vanity Fair article, the author has led the development of this genre since the early 1970's. The author promotes a practice he calls reading with a "double eye." First, you read as "your" reader -- "writing for others in a way you might want others to right for you," learning to read with an eye for what you want and need to read (and hence to write). You learn to appreciate what you want when it's there, and notice when it's not. And there's reading as a writer -- "to understand the approach, the craft, the tricks of the trade of the writer you are reading." Part I provides answers the question in depth, "Just what is creative nonfiction?" There's historical and personal background. And there's a great introduction to the various subgenres of creative nonfiction. The Birth of the Godfather The Definition Debate The Fastest-Growing Genre Truth or... Truth and Fact The Creative Nonfiction Police Schedules The Creative Nonfiction Pendulum: From Personal to Private The Public or "Big Idea" Widening the Pendulum's Swing The Creative Nonfiction Way of Life Selecting Subjects to Write About The Tribulations of the Writer at Work It's the Story, Stupid! It's the Information, Stupid And Finally, a Gentle Reminder Part II is devoted to the craft of creative nonfiction. This material is focused on the subject -- this is no generic "how to write" book. The many exercises make this part even more useful.

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