

# **Writings on Writing**

May Sarton

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Writings on Writing May Sarton

May Sarton's lifetime of work as a poet, novelist, and essayist inform these illuminating reflections on the creative life

In "The Book of Babylon," May Sarton remarks that she is not a critic—except of her own work. The essay addresses questions that have haunted Sarton's own creative practice, such as the concept of "tension in equilibrium"—balancing past and present, idea and image. She also cites poems written by others to describe the joy of writing and how we must give ourselves over to becoming the instruments of our art.

"The Design of a Novel" is about fiction writing—where ideas come from, how theme and character determine plot, the mistakes many fledgling authors make, and how and why the novel differs from the poem. Further texts examine the act of composing verse, one's state of mind when writing poetry, the role of the unconscious, how revising is the loftiest form of creation, and how to keep growing as an artist. Throughout the collection, Sarton also warns about the dangers of trying to analyze the creative process too closely.

A book that doesn't separate art from the artist's life, *Writings on Writing* is filled with Sarton's trademark imagery and insights, letting us know we're in the hands of a master.



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