



The Writer Writes Archive One

My mom says she wasn't surprised when I told her I was writing a novel. She always knew the right side of my brain would prevail. Now she tells me that what actually surprised her was my desire to become a doctor. Math was always a weakness for me and so I think she doubted the left side of my brain. All I know is that in the last twenty five years I've done a lot of knee surgery and I've only written one book. That's it. No short stories. No poems. No medical articles.

I would like to tell aspiring authors that I dedicated thirty minutes a day to writing or that I made myself write a thousand words a day or something like that. I'm thinking of a New Year's resolution for 2006. But it will probably be one of those that are never kept.

I was on my way to Pilot Point, Texas to ride with my horse trainer. It was raining. For some reason I started thinking about 9/11. At that time I was really troubled by atomic bomb threats and specifically I was concerned about Austin, Texas. Maybe the capitol of Texas could be a potential terrorist target. My mind wandered to the illogical and I became tearful thinking about losing my entire family in Austin while I was away riding horses. The tears made my eyesight blur. I blinked them away and suddenly realized that I was driving precariously close behind a horse trailer. And so the story goes... I came home after a weekend of horseback riding, sat down at my computer and fired off the first thirteen pages of Endings, making that scene the opening scene in my novel.

Once starting to write I felt compelled to continue. Almost every night I added to the document. I took my laptop with me to horse shows and training weekends, anticipating a lot of down time. The book was finished in about eight months.

There were times when I would anticipate a mental block, some kind of an impasse. Maybe a difficult transition in the story, an uncomfortable conversation or an ending. I would agonize over it during the day but the words came when I actually sat down to write. There was no outline or plan for the story when I started. Sure, I knew it was going to be about a woman with a serious personal problem and I knew what the problem was, but beyond that, I made it up as I went. This may not work for everyone but I was never any good at outlines.