

The Literature of Personal Disaster Sherri Langton

Why do writers write about tragedy?

- Desire to share comfort, “companionship in a common venture” — someone who knows what I’m feeling.
- Valid sub-genre and literary subject, but too much was “poorly conceived, clumsily written, and carelessly edited.”
- Not enough to be merely horrific.

1. Writing must be real.

- Be transparent, vulnerable — be honest about yourself, event, feelings toward the event, God, family, others.
 - Explore your feelings.
 - ANGER AT GOD IS OK.
- Be descriptive.
 - “Show, don’t tell” — not just narration
 - Make the scene/event come alive for reader: sounds, sights, smells, etc.

Two books: *Writing Life Stories* by Bill Roorbach and *Word Painting* by Rebecca McClanahan

2. Writing must be redemptive.

- Write more than a horrible story.
- There must be a change in the writer or character — spiritual maturation.

What have you learned?

How did you change?

How are you different now than before the tragedy?