

A photograph of a desk setup. On the left is a silver laptop. In the center is a white mug. To the right is a spiral-bound notebook with handwritten text. A pair of glasses with tortoiseshell frames lies on the desk in front of the notebook. The background is a blurred, warm-toned interior.

2021 WORKBOOK
WRITING ANNUAL REVIEW

W E L C O M E , W R I T E R

Seasonal shifts always offer an opportunity to reflect and reframe. And perhaps the most potent transition is when the calendar shifts from December to January and we wake up to a fresh new year.

We all have different ways of taking stock, but I like to sit down with my inner writer and explore my creative life—past, present, and future. The prompts in these pages are the same ones I've used year after year to honor where I've been, settle into where I am, and dream about where I'm headed.

Before arriving at this treasured ritual, I spent my twenties working corporate jobs and spending hours filling out required annual reviews and self evaluations. Often, this felt like wasted time. But one day I decided to translate this experience to my writing life and become my own director of HR.

After all, no one was going to voluntarily research MFA programs or workshops for me, book flights to a writing retreat, or chat with me about the areas where I'd like my writing life to grow or how I needed support. This is something we need to cultivate, which is why at the end of each year I like to sit down and reflect on my creative ebbs and flows, ponder where my work is headed, loosely pencil some things into a calendar, and take stock of the past twelve months of my writing life.

This workbook starts with the past, reviewing 2021 before turning to the future and what you might want to invite into the year ahead.

It should also be noted, this is a judgment-free space. If you had loftier intentions than you were able to achieve this year, can you meet yourself with kindness? If a new idea sprang up that wasn't in your original plan, can you embrace the wonder of it?

2021 was not a normal year. With a global pandemic still clouding our days and all the challenges that's brought in our personal and professional lives, it's no wonder we're all feeling a bit off center and in need of extra grace.

I hope these pages encourage you to nurture your inner writer, and provide some space to dream as well.

—*Nicole*

2021 REFLECTIONS

Let's begin by sorting out the main projects or focus areas from the past year. Examples might include starting a newsletter, drafting a book, getting better at writing dialogue, pitching yourself to podcasts, agents, or what have you. And yes, even "thinking about starting my novel" counts. In the second column, make note of how the project made you feel, any emotions associated with it, and whether it's ongoing or how long it took you to complete.

PROJECT or FOCUS AREA

THOUGHTS/FEELINGS/REFLECTIONS

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2021 REFLECTIONS

Thinking back to this time last year, **what hopes and dreams did you have for your writing life?** How were these intentions met? Or, did they change?

What lit you up? Noticing the emotions you listed on the previous page, which projects felt the most aligned this year? Which opportunities gave you the most energy?

What was draining? Take a look at some of the projects you listed. Did you start something and not finish it? Are you less in love with an idea now? Did social media deplete your energy?

How did you spend your time? Was your writing time consistent or sporadic? What was your schedule like? How did the pandemic impact your creative life this year?

2021 REFLECTIONS

What worked? When you *did* spend time writing, what kind of routines worked for you this year? Were they consistent, or did you adapt to changing seasons?

List some **favorite moments from the past year**. (E.g. winning a prize, receiving your first blog comment, publishing an essay, building friendships with fellow writers, general progress, etc.)

List any **challenges from the past year**. (E.g. a rejection, leaving a story unfinished, forgetting to save your work and losing it, disappointing feedback, etc.)

Did you attend a workshop or conference, or join a virtual writing group? **How did that support your creativity?** How did it impact your work in progress?

L O O K I N G A H E A D : 2 0 2 2

Use this space to brainstorm what you're hoping to work on in 2022, or areas where you'd like to focus your energy. In the "Why Now?" column, reflect on what's pulling you toward this idea. Will it help you reach a larger goal? Is it a continuation of something from last year? Will it help you connect with others? Or will the idea simply not leave you alone?

PROJECT or FOCUS AREA

WHY NOW?

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WHY NOW?

LOOKING AHEAD: 2022

List some words to describe **how you'd like your writing practice to feel in 2022.**

Is there anything in particular you'd like to learn more about? (Like research for a book, for example.) Books you already know you want to read? An author you want to get to know more?

What are you craving? Looking for community? More newsletter subscribers? Hoping to find an agent? List what you need both practically and emotionally.

How can you support yourself to receive it? List some of the ways you can reach out to your family or community to get what you need. What resources do you already have? What resources are you missing?

Do you use social media? How would you like to show up next year? How can you serve your community?

L O O K I N G A H E A D : 2 0 2 2

Where are your margins? You don't need a lot of time to commit to writing. Try 10 minutes a day. Where can you find this pocket of time in your schedule? How are you willing to experiment?

Write an encouraging note to your future self. **On December 31, 2022, what do you want her to know?** How have you adapted to changing circumstances? How has it felt to make meaningful progress? How has your work expanded and deepened?

2022 QUARTERLY INTENTIONS

WINTER

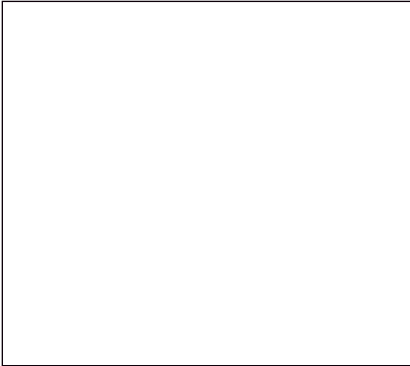
SPRING

SUMMER

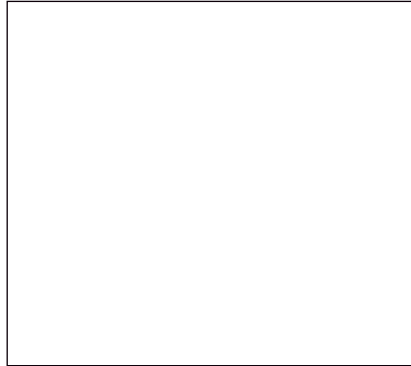
FALL

2022 MONTHLY INTENTIONS

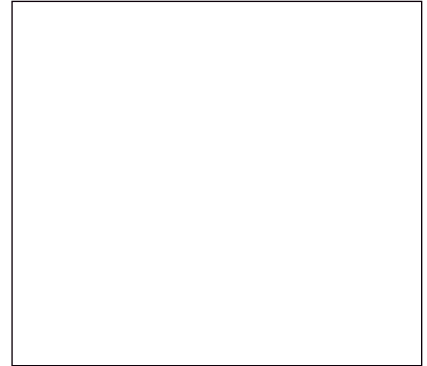
JANUARY



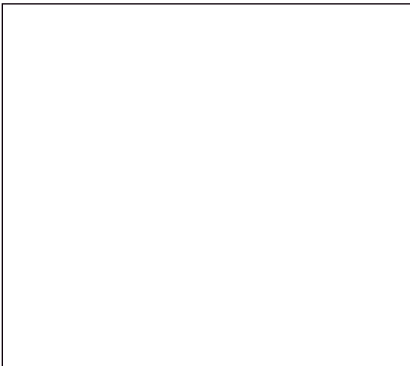
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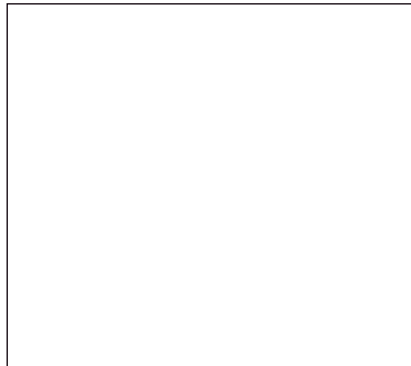
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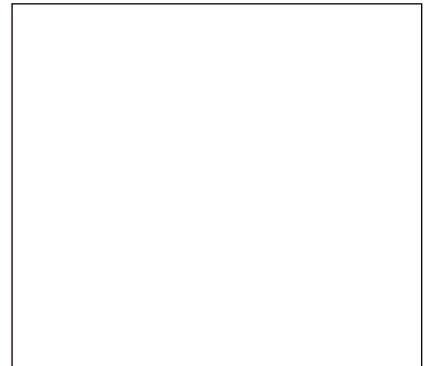
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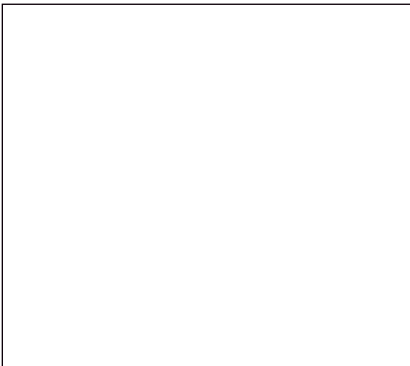
MAY



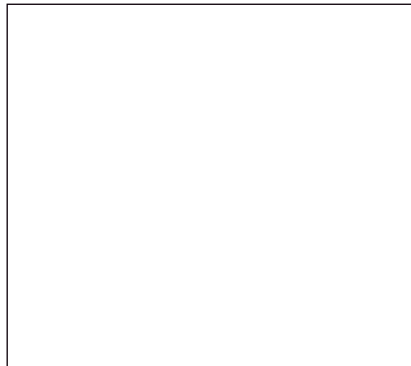
JUNE



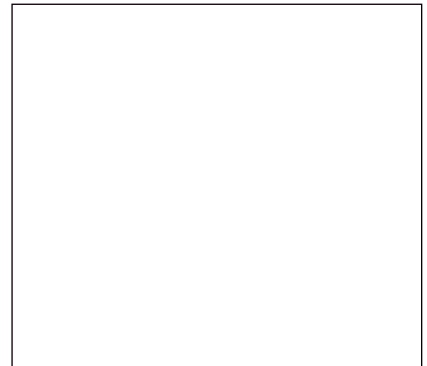
JULY




AUGUST



SEPTEMBER



OCTOBER



NOVEMBER



DECEMBER

