



Dying to Teach: A Memoir of Love, Loss, and Learning

Jeffrey Berman

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Affirms the power of writing to memorialize loss and work through grief.

In *Dying to Teach*, Jeffrey Berman confronts the most wrenching loss imaginable: the death of his beloved wife, Barbara. Through four interrelated narratives—how Barbara wrote about her illness in a cancer diary, how he cared for her throughout her illness, how his students reacted to his disclosure that she was dying, and how he responded to her death—Berman explores his efforts to hold on to Barbara precisely as she was letting go of life. Intensely personal, *Dying to Teach* affirms the power of writing to memorialize loss and work through grief, and demonstrates the importance of death education: teachers and students writing and talking about a subject that, until now, has often been deemed too personal for the classroom.

“The art of teaching, and its ethical complexities, lies at the heart of this courageous and challenging book.”— Curriculum Inquiry

“...a compelling read ... Berman’s emotional accessibility lends itself to a poignant account of grief and bereavement, likely to resonate among readers who have experienced similar loss... A powerful glimpse into the experience of terminal disease, and its devastating effects on individuals and families ... Part memoir, part love story, part scholarly volume, *Dying to Teach* is valuable work, both for bereavement professionals and laypeople in its insightful approach to the grieving process.” — Death Studies

“*Dying to Teach* touches one as an étude, or perhaps a pavane to a lover, a partner, a fellow voyager. It is a beautiful tribute to a glorious woman, and a reminder of the sheer power generated when art, sensitivity, and rare literacy are blended. In these remarkable pages, Jeffrey Berman brings us life, death, and then, magically, a return to life. The insights of this book, and the music of the words, will not soon be forgotten by readers of this master memoir.” — Thomas J. Cottle, author of *When the Music Stopped: Discovering My Mother*

“Jeff Berman has been writing a glowing series of books in which he demonstrates how encouraging students to discuss their most intense experiences can enlarge their humanity as well as add to their store of intellectual knowledge. This book culminates the series. I think it is probably the bravest book I shall ever read. Jeff dares to let me share the most personally devastating and terrifying experience with which life menaces us. And he dares to use that experience in the classroom to write an unforgettable experience in his students’ minds. His way of teaching may not be for all of us, but all of us will be better for having read about it.” — Norman N. Holland, author of *Death in a Delphi Seminar: A Postmodern Mystery*

“This is a difficult book; it will elicit empathic sadness both for the author and for our own losses. College professors lose loved ones too, and such subjects need to be a part of the conversations in the academy. *Dying to Teach* demonstrates the necessity of speaking of grief both to students and to readers. This is a stunning book.” — Marian M. MacCurdy, coeditor of *Writing and Healing: Toward an Informed Practice*

Jeffrey Berman is Professor of English at the University at Albany, State University of New York. His previous books include *Empathic Teaching: Education for Life* and *Risky Writing: Self-Disclosure and Self-Transformation in the Classroom*.

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