



Ghostwriting & Book Coaching

Bring Your Story to Life

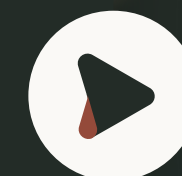
Helping authors craft
captivating memoirs and
nonfiction that blend mythic
storytelling with
transformational truths.

PORTFOLIO

Johanna DeBiase

I help authors shape untold stories into books readers can't put down. With two published books, literary awards, and an MFA in writing, I bring a blend of narrative craft, editorial insight, and close attention to voice.

Whether your story is rooted in real-life adventure, the wild edges of nature, or the magic of ritual and transformation, I'll help you create a book that's evocative, captivating, and impossible to forget.





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What I Offer

Ghostwriting

From concept to polished manuscript, I capture your unique voice and vision with vivid storytelling. Specialties include:

- Memoir and personal narrative
- Adventure and nature-based writing
- Ritual, myth, and transformational nonfiction
- Wellness, creativity, and arts-focused books
- Select literary fiction

Book Coaching

For writers who want to do the writing themselves but need guidance, structure, and accountability. Together, we'll refine your story, strengthen your craft, and guide your project to completion.

Hybrid Model

A collaborative approach blending ghostwriting and coaching, tailored to your goals and workflow.

Other Service can be discussed

How We Work Together



Testimonials



"Johanna helped immensely in teaching me to write as though I was describing a movie. Following her advice led me down a path that resulted in a wonderful memoir, the generational gift of legacy and love we wanted for our grandchildren. Johanna's guiding hand and encouragement led my hand to pen the story of our lives."

Jeffrey Hill
Furniture Designer



"DeBiase's storytelling, both in the overall narrative and in the actual tales her characters tell, deftly excavates the beauty in brokenness and the strange sweetness in sorrow."

**Publisher's
Weekly**

review of *Mama &
the Hungry Hole*



What an amazing experience! Johanna is warm and engaging. With her insight and guidance, I was able to break through a creative block of many, many months. I will put into practice her recommendations for continuing writing success. I highly recommend this experience

Andrea
Royal Oak, MI

Memoir: excerpt from What Compels Me to Live This Way?

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On the remote land at Wild Mountain where I camped for 10 days last week in southwest Colorado, there is a small hogan-shaped cabin. It is a long way from the road and down the slope of the hill, not particularly accessible. They currently use it as a small meeting area and storage space beside the outdoor kitchen. I learned on this recent visit that this was the first structure built on the property. It was inhabited by Linda. Linda lived and died in that cabin alone for 30 years without plumbing and with only a small battery system for electricity. Wild Mountain is adjacent to the San Isabel National Forest at 9,500 feet where the storms come in fast and harsh and frequently.

Thirty years! She lived there in wild solitude away from modernity and the usual comforts of the world without television, phone or internet. Nada. It's crazy! And I was totally jealous.

I am a hermit at heart, a recluse, drawn to the wild places, the minimal, the core essence of existence. If you follow the occult, my moon is in the earthy sign of Taurus. I am also a nine, The Hermit in the major arcana. And this archetype suits me well. Like the little old witch that lives at the edge of the forest, I long to need nothing but the company of trees, ravens, and lizards, mixing my medicinal plants into powerful potions and communing with the ancestors.

Does astrology and numerology explain my desire to live on the outskirts, one foot in and one foot out of society? Was I born this way? Why do I have this innate desire to live like this?

In the seventies, my parents bought an old house in the pastoral suburbs of the lower Hudson Valley outside New York City. They fixed up the house, built a deck, grew a large garden, raised rabbits, fixed up a red VW bug, sewed their own clothes, read Mother Earth News and Organic Gardening magazines, canned vegetables, heated the house with wood they gathered themselves and other such homesteading activities.

When I asked my mother what drew them-- two people of the Silent Generation, a cop from Yonkers and an artist from Brooklyn-- to this path, my mother replied, "I was always creative. Always weird." My mother (also a Taurean moon) was ahead of her time. She didn't get ideas to DIY homestead from anywhere other than her own creative unconventional thinking. She felt like an outsider in the world, always a little different, and so perhaps outside was where she felt most comfortable. I can relate.

Creative Non-Fiction: excerpt from Skinny Dipping in Alpine Lakes

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Cabresto Lake is a manmade lake with a small concrete dam grandfathered into the Latir Peak Wilderness area. The rugged road to the lake has patches of asphalt long decayed. Usually popular with the local fishermen, we had the lake to ourselves this morning.

Starting at 9,000 feet in altitude, we followed the rumbling creek from the lake upstream through the thick lush brush up the canyon along an overgrown trail. New Mexico had a great monsoon season this year allowing us to creep out of drought, and we had all the flora to show for it. Wildflowers glowed in all their August abundance—yarrow, goldenrod, bluebells, wild celery, coneflowers, hare bells, wild roses and mountain aster. Currants dark and ripe. Later up the trail, a plethora of mushrooms bigger than my hand, including the red with white polka dots, psychedelic fly agaric that looked like perfect fairy toadstools. I could hear the devas singing in the alpine meadows in mid-summer glory.

Over five miles and 2,000 feet of altitude gain later, we arrived at Heart Lake. I was exhausted and sweaty. My body ached. My shoulders stiff from the weight of my pack. My calves sore from the climb. Surrounded by pines and tall grass, crowned by Latir Peak, the setting was postcard picture perfect. The waters looked clear enough to drink. Instead of drinking, I took off all my clothes and waded it. No surprise the water was frigid.

The lake was shallow near the banks and the floor of the lake was too rocky for my bare feet, so I only went in far enough for a refreshing waist high dunk. As my body submerged, I surprised myself with the sound that emitted from my own throat. I had involuntarily released a feral howl, a call from my own deep nature. I was animal after all. In response, my howls echoed against the mountain tops. And I howled again and again. No one anywhere for miles but us and the wild.

My husband stayed on shore laughing at my shrill shrieks and photographing my glaring white rear. Exhilarated, I returned to land where I sat pant-less eating my lunch, reluctant to apply civilized clothes to my animal suit.

A simple moment like that can make the struggle of climbing up the mountain and a hard night's sleep all worth it. A call from my animal spirit to jump in and immerse myself in the wilderness butt naked and screaming with life. I may not be very good at being an animal, but I still desire to nurture that part of me that remembers its wild self. Moments of immersion. Moments when I forget my programming and remember that I am not separate from nature. I am nature. I am an animal.

Creative Non-Fiction: Excerpt from Earth Sensory Perception

The unusual cloud curving open, informs me to stop the myopic nitpicking and widen my view. The westward winds swiftly sweep away an image of a dimly lit face shadowed with sorrow, and I sense my mood will as quickly fade. The cloud effervescent with sunbeams mirrors hope. Another cloud shaped like a woman flying and I feel myself long to soar.

Is it so surprising that we might look to the clouds for answers? In Greek mythology, the gods lived in a cloud palace on Mount Olympus. In the Bible, Exodus 16:10, God's glory is described as appearing in a cloud. The practice of nephelomancy is thought to have been used by ancient Babylonian priests. Damascius, a 5th century CE philosopher, recorded an account of a famous nephelomancer named Anthusa during the reign of Emperor Leo I. In the 12th century, Theodore Balsamon, a Greek Orthodox canonist, described how people predicted events by observing cloud shapes at sunset. Cloud divination was extensively used by the Druids, who called it Neladoracht, and would ascend hills or mountains to consult the clouds when kings or queens wanted to glimpse the future.

Yes, we know the science of clouds too. 100 million water droplets of ice crystals suspended in the atmosphere condensed around tiny particles called condensation nuclei composed of sea spray, volcanic ash, fire soot, factory

emissions, sulfuric acid and magical fairy dust. Clouds speak to us like a meteorologist suggesting the day will be sunny and perfect for picnics or for your safety, stay off the mountain ridge this afternoon.

But science and forecasting aside, what brought you outside on this foreboding day and compelled you to stay and watch the sky? Is there a storm brewing in you? Or is a great transformation ready to take place? Do you feel the heavy burden of holding still and are you ready to explode with loud thundering cries, electric sparks of sudden movement or a downpour of emotion? These days, I welcome storm clouds for their mysterious designs instead of rushing for shelter.

Rabindranath Tagore in his book of poetry, Stray Birds, writes, "Clouds come floating into my life, no longer to shed rain or usher storm, but to give color to my sunset sky." [Tagore, R. (1916). Stray birds. The Macmillan Company.] The lens from which you choose to view the clouds will color your divination, so come with a clear eye for clear knowing. Sunset clouds spill indigo ink and pumpkin orange, gerbera fuchsia and morbid grey across matte flat skies. I am entranced by the spectacle and divine pure wonder. I see a dark spaceship far off in the distance and wonder about times in the past when I've had feelings of alienation. Then I notice a yellow wisp of a finger blowing north imploring me to keep going. Soon the finger transforms into a hand, and I feel supported.

Fiction: Excerpt from One Chance to Breathe

The men and women of the city of Xouxi stood shoulder-to-shoulder, winding along the sidewalk, waiting in a line they could not see the end of because the air was too dense with smog. Smog wafted from coal-burning factories and shot from muffler pipes, sending mineral particles into the atmosphere. It hung low and thick over buildings, pushing through street ways and alleyways, along sidewalks. Brown-gray like granite, opaque like storm clouds. People shuffled, myopic, so as not to bump or be bumped, so as not to lose their breath. Their voices croaked and heaved from throats and lungs encrusted with grime.

The line is moving.

How far are we from the end?

The people spoke through white cotton surgical masks, their speech muffled with coughing. Opal did not chat easily with the others in line, her in-laws, who had never known life without masks, rasping voices, or burning lungs. They had grown up in the city and were accustomed to the clanging noises and shuffling pace.

All day they watched on television about the new shipment of air being brought down from the mountains in the air trucks where, for 600 yuan each, an average year's salary, they could have one minute to suck from a tube, the clean oxygen

of nature. The newscasters speculated that the sensation must be like drinking spring water, fresh and cool, into your lungs.

Like your whole body is lifted and floating in space for only a moment, Opal said in a whisper when there was a lull.

She knows nothing, her mother-in-law said to the brother-in-law. She doesn't remember a thing.

I do too, Opal said. I remember everything.

Unlikely, said her father-in-law.

That was yesterday. Today Opal and the in-laws woke before daybreak, when the sky turned the color of rotten bananas. But they were not the first in line. Many others had arrived before them. Now the line moved forward and somewhere in the far distance ahead of them was the truck with the air machine that whirled and vibrated inside its metal cage.

Opal cradled her belly in her hands. She was eight months pregnant and her ankles swelled from standing for so long. Her husband chattered with his brothers in front of her. Before them, his grandparents sat in folding chairs. There was no chair for Opal. She was a small woman aside from the bulge of her belly that threatened to tip her forward so that she had to arch back as her hips splayed apart. She used to be as fair as the swans that swam on her father's lake, but the city had encrusted itself into her pores so that her skin was dark and ruddy like the others.

PORTFOLIO

Get in touch
with me to
schedule a free
discovery call



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