



Prose and Lore: Memoir Stories About Sex Work

Audacia Ray (Editor) , Anna Saini (Contributor) , Sur Madam (Contributor) , Rita Rachael (Contributor) , Gerry Visco (Contributor) , Lee Brandon (Aguilar) , Lily Fury (Contributor) , Page Campbell (Contributor) , more... Mandy Tz (Contributor) , Dion Scott (Contributor) , Dominick (Contributor) , Rei (Contributor) , Danielle (Contributor) ...less

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Selling sex is a job that many people would never consider. But for the people who do the work, pleasure is a business that sometimes sustains them and sometimes puts them at risk. In the second issue of the Red Umbrella Project's Prose & Lore, New Yorkers who have traded sex tell true stories of lessons learned, friendships with coworkers, unpleasant bosses, bodily functions, and more that make up their experiences in the industry.

"Gutsy wisdom permeates these pages. Prose & Lore brings together a keen array of lived experiences and authentic voices." - Amber Dawn, author of *How Poetry Saved My Life: A Hustler's Memoir*

"This [journal], simply by virtue of existing, is part of a larger project to counteract the stereotypes and stigma that works to threaten those in the sex industries." - Jessie Nicole, *Tits & Sass*

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From Reader Review Prose and Lore: Memoir Stories About Sex Work for online ebook

Danni says

Won this in a First Reads giveaway. What a fascinating read. Sometimes I think that the people doing sex work get lost behind negative headlines or Law & Order reruns. These stories put very human faces on sex work. Absolutely incredible.

Leigh Leeg says

I absolutely loved this book. Every narrative felt completely different to me, which made turning each page exciting. It's a truly fine collection of stories that will make people with sex work experience probably at least once (probably more) feeling in good company, but is still accessible to people who aren't directly familiar. So much of the writing is genuinely beautiful, and genuinely moving.

Ashley Hiatt says

Hard read sometimes. Funny at other moments. Wonderful to get a completely new perspective! Also possible job options lol.

Sandy says

I received this book in exchange for a honest review.

Here it is.

I found the kind of boring.

Jessie Nicole says

In the world of sex work memoirs, both in print and on blogs, Prose & Lore stands out as an illustration of the complexities and contradictions of the sex industries. Dynamic and visceral, each piece feels almost like experiencing an author's memory through a pensieve.

For me, almost every piece in Prose & Lore felt personally relatable, sometimes hilariously and painfully so. I cheered aloud for Lily Fury in "St. Marks Hotel Lost and Found." I winced in recognition at Dee Dee Behind's self conscious description of the relationship of her work life and her politics. And I vicariously felt Brandon Aguilar's pain as he went through surgery in "Skin Deep."

But what really hit home were the numerous and varied accounts of friendship and camaraderie. In strip clubs, on the streets, and everywhere else sex workers have built communities and support networks. I was thrilled to be a part of the authors' multi-faceted communities, even if for only as long as it took me to read their stories.

Prose & Lore consists of about 75% previously unpublished authors, and sometimes that shows. Some of the pieces felt unpolished and even unfinished. But the end result is a sense of brutal intimacy with the writers. Even pieces I didn't particularly like were compelling and inspired strong emotional reactions from me and I value that element more highly than construction or diction.

It may well have been due to the waning initial thrill that this journal even exists, but I felt like the second issue was not quite as strong as the first. Prose and Lore: Memoir Stories About Sex Work

Given how much I loved the first, that's not very heavy criticism, but it was the difference between 4 and 5 stars for me. While I've done my fair share of contemplating my lipstick collection, and actually have the same Cruella shade described in "Loose Lips," it still felt overly naval gaze-y to me. Similarly the "I Remember" trope in "I Remember Market Street Cinema" took away from what was otherwise a brilliant series of vignettes. But, as previously stated, even the stories that were weaker to me felt like honest and important contributions to the larger goal of complicating and expanding narratives of the sex industries.

Audacia Ray, editor of the collection and director of Red Umbrella Project, sums up my feelings about Prose & Lore in the introduction:

"I've never been more sure that there is inherent value in the life stories of people in the sex trades and that it is important to put these stories out into the world. There is no way to summarize or generalize about the experiences of people in the sex trades. The only way to know anything about the sex trades is to hear and trust the many stories of the people involved in it, and to keep listening, even when the stories offer conflicting viewpoints."

I couldn't agree more.

Because I'm a fairly unique audience in that I've devoured so many sex work memoirs and am a part of sex work and sex work activist communities, I honestly don't know how people outside of those communities will receive Prose & Lore. But I think it's important that we find out. RedUP is trying to get this journal into classrooms in particular, and I think that is a brilliant and important move. I believe strongly in the power of personal narrative, and I think that Prose & Lore is a powerful example of stories from the sex industries.

And once again, I'm left eagerly awaiting the next issue.
