



## **JOAN LOREN GAUSTAD**

Joan Loren Gaustad is an artist living and working in Richmond, Virginia near the VCU campus where the students are a constant source of inspiration. She is the author of the visual memoir, *Someone's Missing...and I Think It's Me* (VCU Libraries Publishing, 2021). The book tells the story of her marriage to the painter and beloved professor, Jerry Donato, as they tried to navigate the mysteries and terrors of early-onset dementia. Gaustad originally intended to write a guide sharing what she learned in the eight years of his illness; the book, however, became a story of love and loss and how art helped her find beauty and joy in what remained.

*Someone's Missing...and I Think It's Me* was nominated for The Library of Virginia 2022 Literary Prize in Nonfiction.

Gaustad has previously published the photo-memoir *House Hold* with photographer, Michael Lease and RVA ART, a small zine about the healing protest art on Richmond's Monument Avenue.

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## **PATTI GAUSTAD PROCOPI**

Patti knew she wanted to be a writer after she learned the magic of reading at the age of five. She took numerous writing courses in high school and college and always had a story in her head but life intervened and she didn't have time to actually write anything down.

She and her husband were busy raising three daughters and numerous cats and dogs. Finally, after thirty-two years of working at two area history museums, Patti retired and she finally had time to put pen to paper. It was a learning experience, but she's had two novels published and her third is complete and will be published later this year.

Patti calls her work biographical fiction. Her novels are about families – the good, the bad and the ugly. Stories of heartbreak and joy. Patti has won two writing awards and had a short story published in a literary journal.

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Procopi started writing around the same time Joan chose to write a memoir about losing her husband to early onset dementia. Patti wrote a novel about two sisters and the tragedy that bonded them. Joan's memoir is fact. Patti's novel is a biographical narrative blending facts with fiction. Some of the same stories appear in both works but are told differently.

They will walk you through their writing journey to inspire yours.

The basics of memoir writing will be covered – how it differs from an autobiography, the types of memoirs, how to decide on your theme, what pivotal moments need to be included or excluded, and doing an outline.

Joan will then discuss why she felt compelled to write a memoir about her husband. And Patti will talk about taking the stories from your life and turning them into a novel.