

# INTRODUCTION

You know how sometimes you just get stuck, looking at a blank page or computer screen? Welcome to our world, where it's hard to stay bottled up. And where, "after writing on scraps of paper all those years, finally, magical sense!" Sometimes it's a prompt — first line or title for a story — from *How to Write Your Memoirs*, or *Diving Boards: First Lines and Titles for Stories...Or...If You See A Man Alone On The Beach In Mexico, It Means His Wife Is Upstairs, Throwing Up In The Room*. Other times, Ina tosses out an (often bizarre) improv line, and we're off and running. And sharing our stories aloud also opens the mental doors.

You'll find Kay became quite attached to the prompt, "Last Sunday in \_\_\_\_\_, a man appeared. His name was Harold" (see page 166). And Laurel, when she isn't bumping someone off, often veers, like Kay, into Faerie Land (see *Fairy Tales for Grownups™*, page 190). With Eliza, it's snakes in India; Louis, women; Henry, vivid tales of the Depression; and of course a lot more — memories, people and trips, real and imaginary.

Almost all of us came in to classes to write memoirs, but find that both life story questions and odd lines are great aids for the task. Each type of story starter gets creative juices flowing, helps us make our life histories more coherent and human, and they're just plain fun. Try your own hand at any prompts we've aMUSEd™ ourselves with. You'll also find a selection of brand new ones from the coming book, *Ina's Weird Prompts™* (page 208).

Best of all, if you can make it to the workshops, or set up one in your area, you'll find yourself challenged — and inspired — to write. We hope you like our stories, and happy writing to you, too!

*The Pauprints Writing Club*