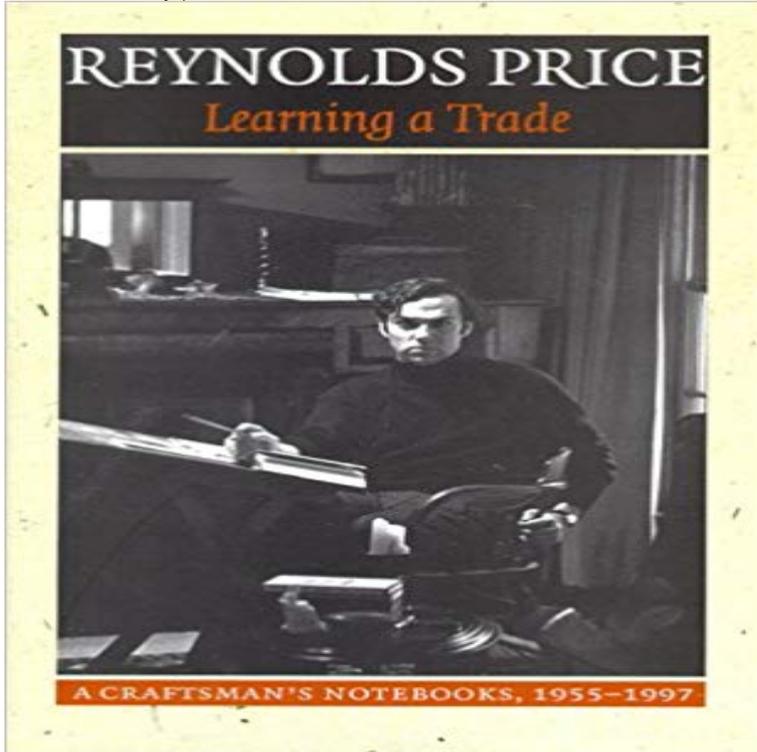


Learning a Trade: A Craftsman's Notebooks: 1955-1997



From Reynolds Price, much acclaimed author of award-winning novels, plays, poems, stories, and essays, comes a work that is unique among contemporary writers of American literature. For more than forty years, Price has kept a working journal of his writing life. Now published for the first time, *Learning a Trade* provides a revealing window into this writer's creative process and craftsman's sensibilities. Whether Price is reflecting on the rhythm of his day-to-day writing process or ruminating about the central character in what would become, for instance, *Kate Vaidenshould* she be a woman, what would be her name, why would the story be told in the first person? he envelops the reader in the task at hand, in the trade being practiced. Instead of personal memoir or a collection of literary fragments, *Learning a Trade* presents what Price has called the ongoing minutes of his effort to learn his craft. Equally enlightening as an overview of a career of developing prominence or as a perspective on the building of individual literary works, this volume not only allows the reader to hear the author's internal dialogue on the hundreds of questions that must be turned and mulled during the planning and writing of a novel but, in an unplanned way, creates its own compelling narrative. These notebooks begin in that distant summer in dazed Eisenhower America, a month after Price's graduation from Duke University, and conclude in the raucous millennial present with plans for his most recent novel, *Roxanna Slade*. Revealing the genesis and resolution of such works as *The Surface of Earth*, *The Source of Light*, *Kate Vaiden*, *Clear Pictures*, and *Blue Calhoun*, *Learning a Trade* offers a rich reward to those seeking to enter the guild of writers, as well as those intrigued by the process of the literary life or captured by the work of Reynolds Price.

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