

# Q&A with Carol Dine

AWARD-WINNING POET & ESSAYIST



## How long did it take you to write *Places in the Bone*?

About two to three years. During that time, I was teaching writing on literature at Suffolk University, so I wrote after my classes, even though I felt depleted, and on weekends. I needed to keep going.

## Would you discuss your process?

The memoir has two themes—surviving both breast cancer and domestic abuse. Actually, it was less painful to discuss my cancer—I'd already published essays and poems on the subject. Remembering my father's abuse was more traumatic. I kept separate folders for each topic, and only tackled them when I felt ready.

## How did your family respond to the memoir?

My father was deceased, but several family members were upset and disputed the account of my childhood; I deliberately lost contact with them. My sister and an aunt not only believed me, but provided emotional support after the memoir was published.

## Who else provided support?

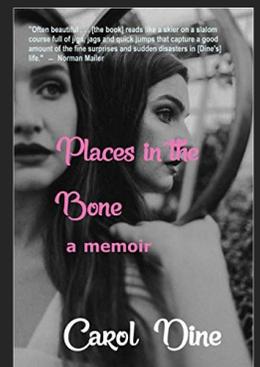
My primary source of support while I was writing *Places in the Bone*—and after—was my therapist. In fact, during my sessions with him, I uncovered memories from my childhood which I included in the memoir.

## Would you discuss the narrative voice you used?

When I proofed the galleys before the book was re-released on Amazon, it was as if I were reading the writing of someone else. It was not the account itself that was surprising, but the voice—it seemed dreamy, like a teenager was telling her story.

## How did the quote from Norman Mailer come about?

He happened to be giving a presentation at Suffolk University, where I was teaching at the time. Afterwards, he and the English Department faculty went to a pub, but nobody had offered him a drink. I brought one over to him, and he asked me to join him. Flushed, I sat opposite him, and we had a lengthy discussion about his work. I took a chance, mentioned my memoir, and he graciously offered to read it. A month or so later, his assistant sent me what he'd written about my book—I was overjoyed.



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