

Becoming Virginia Woolf

Her Early Diaries and the Diaries She Read

BARBARA LOUNSBERRY

"Explores the history of Woolf's diaries, not only to reveal heretofore unremarked sources, but also to trace her evolving sense of possibilities in diary-writing, possibilities which helped shape Woolf as fiction writer. A must-read for devotees of Virginia Woolf."—Panthea Reid, author of *Art and Affection: A Life of Virginia Woolf*

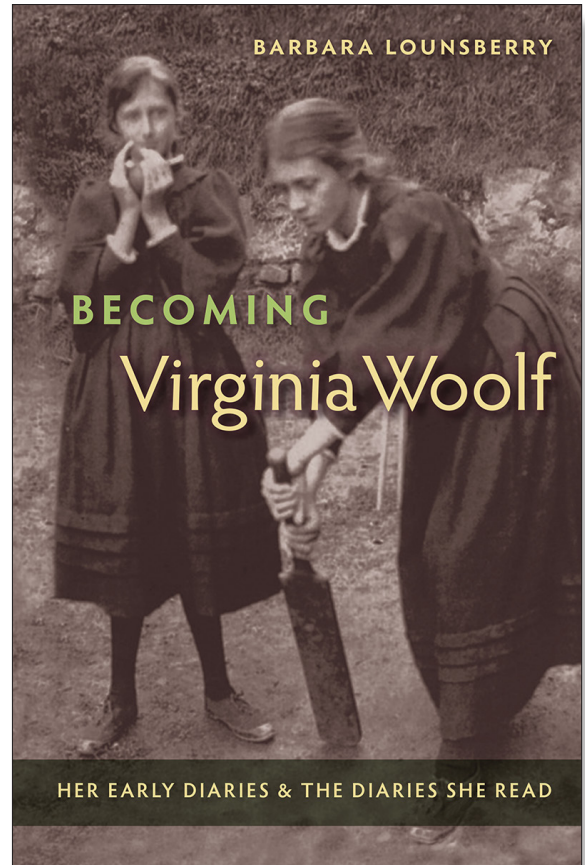
"This revealing book gives us a diarist with greater literary range than Pepys and affords us a second pleasure: the infinitely varied voices of the diaries Virginia read. They fascinate us as they fascinate her: those writers who encouraged, warned, comforted, and trained a developing genius."—Nancy Price, author of *Sleeping with the Enemy*

"Lounsberry's deeply researched and gracefully written book shows not only Woolf's development into a great diarist but also her evolution into the fiction and nonfiction writer revered today."—Gay Talese, author of *A Writer's Life*

Encompassing thirty-eight handwritten volumes, Virginia Woolf's diary is her lengthiest and longest-sustained work, and last work to reach the public. In the only full-length work to explore deeply this luminous and boundary-stretching masterpiece, Barbara Lounsberry traces Woolf's development as a writer through her first twelve diaries—a fascinating experimental stage, where the earliest hints of Woolf's pioneering modernist style can be seen.

Starting with fourteen-year-old Woolf's first palm-sized leather diary, *Becoming Virginia Woolf* illuminates how her private and public writing was shaped by the diaries of other writers including Samuel Pepys, James Boswell, the French Goncourt brothers, Mary Coleridge, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Woolf's "diary parents"—Sir Walter Scott and Fanny Burney. These key literary connections open a new and indispensable window onto the story of one of literature's most renowned modernists.

BARBARA LOUNSBERRY is professor emerita of English at the University of Northern Iowa. She is the author of *The Art of Fact: Contemporary Artists of Nonfiction* and coeditor of *Writing Creative Nonfiction: The Literature of Reality*.



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