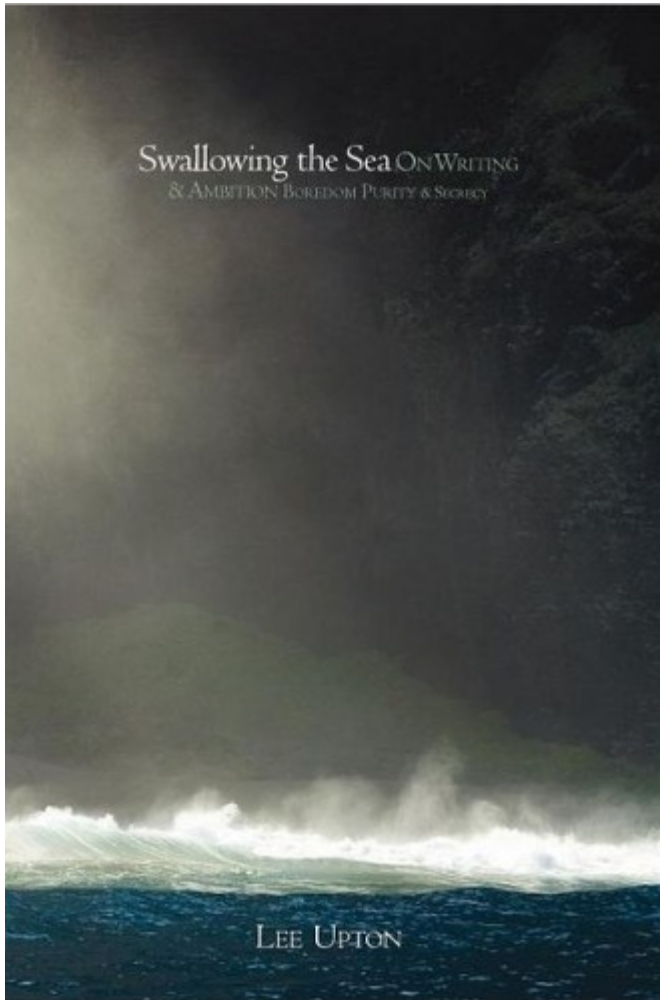


Swallowing the Sea, by Lee Upton

Books in the [September 5, 2012](#) issue

In Review



Swallowing the Sea

By Lee Upton
Tupelo Press

Upton is an award-winning poet, novelist and critic who here writes about the writing enterprise. This is not a how-to manual, and it would be a mistake if only other writers or would-be writers were to read *Swallowing the Sea*. Readers will find

themselves becoming more self-aware as readers, not to mention receiving many reading suggestions. Upton ponders emotions and experiences common to all humans—such as those named in the book’s subtitle. Her poetic gift shows in her often sparse prose, which at times can stop readers in their tracks. For example, in the chapter on secrets she writes: “In a totalitarian society, private life is official business. Our most treasured secrets belong to the state.”