

**Chapter 1 : Paris Review - John Edgar Wideman, The Art of Fiction No.**

*John Edgar Wideman (born June 14, ) is an American writer and professor emeritus at Brown University. He sits on the contributing editorial board of the literary journal Conjunctions.*

Sources John Edgar Wideman is one of the leading chroniclers of life in urban black America. His provocative works depict the widening chasm between the urban poor and the white power structure in the United States , as well as the deep cultural conflicts engendered in African Americans who succeed in penetrating that power structure. His body of work includes novels, short story collections, and nonfiction. Much of his fiction explores events and personalities from the Homewood section of Pittsburgh , the all-black neighborhood where he grew up. His stories reveal several generations of Homewood residents, including those who have left the area in triumph or tragedy. For Wideman, an Oxford-trained scholar, that process of absorbing a community and relating its history artistically has provided grist for complex revelations on family relationships, isolation, and the search for self. Wideman told the Washington Post: It has helped him to address his own personal tragedies, including the life-term prison sentences of his son and his brother. In interviews the author says little about his brother, Robby, who is serving time in Pennsylvania as an accessory to murder, or about his son Jacob, convicted in in the stabbing death of another teenager. University of Pennsylvania , B. Writer, " ; professor of English and creative writing, " . University of Pennsylvania , Philadelphia, , began as instructor, became professor of English, , director of Afro-American studies program, ; University of Wyoming, Laramie, professor of English, ; University of Massachusetts at Amherst, professor of English, " . My life is a closed book. My fiction is an open book. They may seem like the same book"but I know the difference. When he was not yet a year old, his family moved to Pittsburgh, where his great-great-grandmother, a fugitive slave, had settled in the mid-nineteenth century. John became an honor student and an athlete, with dreams of playing professional basketball. If he was an intruder, he was determined to make his presence known. During his high school years, his family moved to a suburb called Shadyside so he could attend highly ranked Peabody High School. There he earned top grades and became class president and captain of the basketball team. He graduated first in his class in Speaking out, identifying myself with the group being slurred by these expressions, was impossible. I had neither the words nor the heart. I talked the talk and walked the walk of the rest of my companions. One of only six black students at the Ivy League college, he became well-known for his basketball skill and for his exposition talents. He was among the last of the great 6-foot-2 forwards, before forwards became 7-footers" a leaper who could mix it up underneath and take rebounds off players three and four inches bigger than he was. He was the first African American in more than a half-century to earn the important academic award. National recognition came from Look magazine, where a profile of Wideman ran in I figured which side I wanted to be on when the Saints came marching in. He studied English literature and philosophy and wrote a thesis on eighteenth-century narrative techniques. He also married Judith Goldman, a fellow Penn graduate. While still in his twenties Wideman began publishing fiction. All three books deal with black protagonists who are confused and controlled by their pasts, and who are, at the very least, highly ambivalent about white society. As early as Hurry Home Wideman began to explore the importance of cultural history to self-awareness and the role that family ties and friendships serve in promoting peace of mind. Throughout the period when his first three novels appeared, Wideman was teaching literature at the University of Pennsylvania. There he was asked to present a course on black writing, and he delved deeply into black literature for the first time. After the funeral, Wideman and his family reminisced about the history of the family in Homewood, going back many generations, almost to the founding of the neighborhood. From that conversation and others remembered from his childhood, Wideman fashioned his best-known work to date. Wideman wrote most of his books and stories about Homewood while living in the prairie town of Laramie, Wyoming. He accepted a teaching position at the university there in late Enthusiastic reviews followed the publication of each of the Homewood Trilogy installments.

*JOHN EDGAR WIDEMAN is the author of more than twenty works of fiction and nonfiction, including the award-winning Brothers and Keepers, Philadelphia Fire, and most recently the story collection God's Gym.*

And so by presuming to call these gentlemen, these historical figures, by initials, already sets up a kind of relationship between the narrative voice and the characters. That is, as far as possible, the historical information is accurate. The two men did know one another, they did meet often. They had a kind of a quasi-secret relationship towards the end of their lives, because John Brown was essentially a fugitive, and there was a price on his head. I relied on that for part of the story. I do a lot of work. And my response to those things in my life is to interrogate them, try to make sense of them, sing about them, cry about them, etc. Coping with history, coping with what it means to be alive. How do you talk about the Holocaust? How do you talk about slavery? Probably the best thing to do is just be quiet and hide from it, forget about it. Except, then it jumps up and bites you. The stories should speak for themselves. The note is a plea, Mr. I am quite aware, sir, that history says the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution abolished slavery in the United States of America in , and that ensuing amendments extended to former slaves the precious rights and protections our nation guarantees to all its citizens regardless of color. But you should understand better than most of us, Mr. President, that history tells as many lies as truths. The Thirteenth Amendment announced the beginning of the end of slavery as a legal condition in America. Slavery as a social condition did not disappear. After serving our nation for centuries as grounds to rationalize enslavement, African ancestry and colored skin remain acceptable reasons for the majority of noncolored Americans to support state-sponsored, state-enforced segregation, violence, and exploitation. Skin color continues to separate some of us into a category as unforgiving as the label property stamped on a person. Dividing human beings into immutable groups identifiable by skin color reincarnates scientifically discredited myths of race. Keeps alive the unfortunate presumption, held by many of my fellow citizens, that they belong to a race granted a divine right to act as judges, jurors, and executioners of those who are members of other incorrigibly different and inferior races. What should be done, Mr. Our nation is deeply unsafe. I feel threatened and vulnerable. What can I do. Do we need another Harpers Ferry. Do we possess in our bottomless arsenal a weapon to demolish lies that connect race, color, and slavery. By the time this note reaches your desk, Mr. President, if it ever does, you may be a woman. Once we had elected a colored President, the block was busted. Perhaps you are a colored woman, and that would be an edifying surprise. This note is getting too long. And to be perfectly honest, Mr. President, I believe terminating slavery may be beyond even your vast powers. Anyway, please read on and enjoy the stories that follow. No obligation to free a single slave of any color, Ms. Stories, by John Edgar Wideman. This segment aired on March 21,

**Chapter 3 : John Edgar Wideman | Literary Arts Program**

*John Edgar Wideman, (born June 14, , Washington, D.C., U.S.), American writer regarded for his intricate literary style in novels about the experiences of black men in contemporary urban America.*

Although he left Homewood to attend the University of Pennsylvania on a basketball scholarship, the legacies of family and community remain a rich source of material for his work. Wideman sat down for a first interview in his small, book-lined office at the University of Massachusettes, where he has taught since A second conversation took place last fall at a crowded restaurant in Boston. In both meetings, Wideman spoke for hours, only occasionally raising his voice above a near whisper. Many of your novels are set in Homewood, where you grew up. What was life like for you there? So there I was a little kid and I was around every age bracket and not only seeing them, but hearing them talkâ€”being taken around the neighborhood by my grandfather and meeting his cronies. It was very rich in that way. She had all the information about family members and the gossip that came out of the church, because we were very much part of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. At family gatherings, the older folk had the floor, had pride of place, and it was their stories I remember. They were more stories about family peculiarities, and characters in the family or in the neighborhood. Part of it was just hearing. You had to be there to appreciate it, you had to be part of the fabric of the history for them to have real meaning. The stories also changed as I got older. They got bawdier; they got raunchier. Sometimes they just changed because people change. Part of what would happen is that other people would add little bits and pieces to the story. What really happened was x, y, and z. You would get competing versions, and it became like dueling banjos. People would try to out talk or over talk or loud talk one another. The stories were performances. They are not set pieces, but folk art, folk performance. Stories are told over time, and so they naturally accrue meanings. The stories were common property. In Haiti, as I understand it, storytelling and history itself are not a business of necessarily elucidating facts or the truth of an incident, but finding the version that is most entertaining and therefore will get retold and live in immortality. Pretty eclectic, pretty happenstance. There were a lot of books in my house, so that was another source. My mother was a reader, my father was a reader. Not anything particularly sophisticated. My mother read fat historical or romantic novels; my father liked to read Westerns, Zane Grey, that kind of stuff. Whatever they brought in, I read. I liked stuff that had an adventurous edge to it, that took me to places I had no experience of. Movies and TV were much less a part of daily lifeâ€”there was nothing to grab the imagination. Books were my Internet, my TV, my movies all rolled into one. I spent a lot of time inside my own head, a lot of time sort of staring into space wondering what the hell was going on. I had solitary instincts when I was very young, and reading was a way to make that time a little more entertaining.

*John Edgar Wideman is the distinguished author of nearly 20 books of fiction and nonfiction, including, most recently, the novels *Two Cities* (Houghton Mifflin, ), *The Cattle Killing* (Houghton Mifflin, ), and *Philadelphia Fire* (Henry Holt, ).*

Tickets This event is free; no tickets are required. The Louis Till File. An evocative and personal exploration of individual and collective memory in America by one of the most formidable Black intellectuals of our time. In , Emmett Till, aged fourteen, traveled from his home in Chicago to visit family in Mississippi. Several weeks later he returned, dead; allegedly he whistled at a white woman. His mother, Mamie, wanted the world to see what had been done to her son. She chose to leave his casket open. Images of her brutalized boy were published widely. Author of the award-winning *Brothers and Keepers*, Wideman brings extraordinary insight and a haunting intimacy to this devastating story. An amalgam of research, memoir, and imagination, *Writing to Save a Life* is completely original in its delivery—“an engaging and enlightening conversation between generations, the living and the dead, fathers and sons. Wideman turns seventy-five this year, and he brings the force of his substantial intellect and experience to this beautiful, stirring book, his first nonfiction in fifteen years. Praise "In his long awaited new book, *Writing to Save a Life*, John Edgar Wideman tells the largely forgotten story of Louis Till, a man of color who suffered a miscarriage of racial justice a full decade before the infamous lynching of his son Emmett. Wideman pens a powerful blend of fact and fiction, riffing on concerns and themes that he has explored for a half century now in his highly distinguished body of prose. These pages represent a wise and wonderful achievement, both timely and timeless. The Louis Till File excavates the forgotten prequel to a brutal chapter in the ongoing history of American racial injustice. I read this provocative and surprising book in the wake of the murders of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile, and it felt utterly essential. This is one of those books virtually impossible to write. And by a great American writer. He recently completed a term as a Junior Prize Fellow in the Center for History and Economics, where he is now a faculty associate. His current research project, *The Tragic Vision of the Civil Rights Movement*, sits at the intersection of political theory, philosophy of history, and African-American Studies. He is also editing a collection of essays on the political philosophy of Martin Luther King, Jr. He divides his time between New York and France.

### Chapter 5 : John Edgar Wideman - Events - Harvard Book Store

*John Edgar Wideman likes to be in places where people don't know who he is or what he does for a living. He spends most of the year in New York, but two of his favorite people here are his.*

Children Three John Edgar Wideman born June 14, is an American writer, professor at Brown University , [1] and sits on the contributing editorial board of the literary journal Conjunctions. He grew up in Pittsburgh , Pennsylvania , US, and much of his writing is set there, especially in the Homewood neighborhood of the East End. Henry Award for his short story "Weight", published in Callaloo Journal. He currently is a professor at Brown University. Awards Wideman has been the recipient of a number of awards for his writing. His novel Philadelphia Fire: Wideman was chosen as winner of the Rea Award for the Short Story in , for outstanding achievement, and won the lifetime achievement award of the Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards in Family In he married Judith Ann Goldman, an attorney, with whom he has three children: Daniel, Jacob, and Jamila. That marriage ended in divorce in He was most recently denied parole on January 8, Reuben , New York, NY: Two Cities , Boston, MA: Fanon , Boston, MA: Fever short stories , New York, NY: Briefs micro stories , Raleigh, NC: Lulu Press , University Press of Mississippi , Running Press , University of Pittsburgh Press, National Geographic Directions, Retrieved on January 30,

### Chapter 6 : John Edgar Wideman | Speedy deletion Wiki | FANDOM powered by Wikia

*John Edgar Wideman was Voted the #40 Favorite Author of the 20th Century John Edgar Wideman was born in Washington, DC., in Shortly before his first birthday, his family moved to Homewood, an African-American community in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which has been the locale of much of his fiction.*

### Chapter 7 : John Edgar Wideman - Wikipedia

*About John Edgar Wideman: A widely-celebrated writer and the winner of many literary awards, he is the first to win the International PEN/Faulkner Award.*

### Chapter 8 : Books by John Edgar Wideman (Author of Brothers and Keepers)

*John Edgar Wideman's short stories display a range of fictional styles and subjects, but many of his best stories center on life in Homewood, a black neighborhood in Pittsburgh where Wideman grew up, and the history that lives just behind its decaying housefronts.*

### Chapter 9 : Philadelphia Fire 1st Edition By John Edgar Wideman | eBay

*John Edgar Wideman is a big man. Though slightly stooped at sixty, he still has a basketball player's bodyâ€”long arms, huge hands, legs that seem to rise nearly to his chest. Long admired for its lyricism, Wideman's work carries with it the rhythms and cadences of black vernacular and music.*