

# Start Writing Fiction

## Why writers write

### **NARRATOR:**

Giving your readers enough detail is essential. Listening to novelists Michèle Roberts and Tim Pears, what do you think is the importance of detail to their storytelling? What sort of detail are they talking of? What does Roberts mean by 'slowing down'? What effect does it have?

### **MICHÈLE ROBERTS:**

Well in *Daughters of the House*, I tried to slow down my writing and it wasn't really in order to make evocations of place, it was in order to write better. Because I can write with great facility and I write very badly when I do that, and I've often found when I'm starting a novel, particularly if I've put it in the past tense and if I use a third person narrative, it's terribly easy to get possessed by the ghost of Georgette Heyer. Now I did love her when I was a little girl of 13, wanting to find out about sex and romance, but they are stories that just gallop off with you – they throw you across the saddle like the heroine is tossed over the saddle, and away you go. And actually for writing my own novels, this wouldn't do. So to slow myself down, and slay the ghost of Georgette Heyer, I tried to turn into a kind of witnessing camera, I suppose, and look at things very closely, in great detail, and just use all my senses.

### **TIM PEARS:**

In general, writing is about detail isn't it? It's about, when you're reading a book, you're reading about the moment and the description of small things is, I mean a novel is composed of lots and lots of moments, and lots of sentences and each sentence, I guess, is an attempt at something concrete in this strange symbolic form that language is so, it's all about detail really.