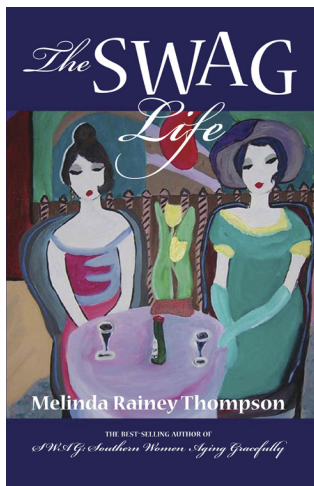


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Melinda Rainey Thompson chronicles *The SWAG Life*



SWAG: Southern Women Aging Gracefully, the 2006 debut of Melinda Rainey Thompson, was a runaway hit among Southern women, the men who love them, and the women who want to be them.

SWAG spent 16 weeks on the bestseller list of the Southern Independent Book-seller Alliance; Southern Living said Thompson “definitely hits a nerve – and tickles the funny bone”; the Memphis Commercial-Appeal said she

“has a knack for finding the Southern heart in ordinary life”; and Thompson traveled the South speaking to groups and at bookstores.

In the meantime, though, Southern women kept on aging gracefully. Husbands, children, parents, Southern manners, and suburban life kept on giving Thompson plenty of opportunity to find humor in the everyday, if only to laugh to keep from crying. She shares more of her offbeat, sweetly satirical observations in her new book, *The SWAG Life*.

“The easiest thing about publishing a book is writing it,” Thompson writes. “That’s the fun part. Words bubble up like cheap shampoo when I’m on a roll, and, lucky for me, the SWAGs in my life provide me with plenty of humorous material, some I can actually write about without getting sued.”

In *The SWAG Life*, Thompson takes on the danger of falling for “The Suburban Cliché” (“I have been known to reduce arrogant Yankee men to rubble with a few well-placed bits of conversational platitude without having to raise my voice or smudge my lipstick”); the extensive strategic thinking required to borrow treasured family heirlooms (“These women know it is wise to call the matriarch who has custody of the heirloom christening gown from the delivery room of the hospital to reserve that gown for a christening date six months down the road”); and the

wide, wide world of “Southern Mamas and Sports” (“Last year, my husband and I went wild and split an order of chicken fingers in the bottom of the ninth inning to celebrate our anniversary”).

For the convenience of non-SWAGs, Thompson compiles several lists chock-full of such useful SWAGgerific information as “Ten Ways to Know You Live in the Suburbs,” including “1) The squirrels, birds, raccoons, and other wild animals look fatter, happier, and healthier than most humans you know,” and “4) Every kid on the block knows which tree in your yard is home base.”

“The main thing you need to know is that the first book was an accident,” Thompson writes in her preface. “I’m going about my ordinary, twenty-first-century Southern woman’s life the same way you are. We’ve probably run into each other at the Piggly Wiggly, the ballpark, the church, the school, or out there in the errand-running of life. Even if we’ve never met personally, I bet we know some of the same people. The South is like that—connected in a way that is both comforting and a little frightening.

“This second book, *The SWAG Life*, wasn’t part of a grand plan, either. It just happened. My excuse is that writing is much cheaper than therapy, so I hope all of you continue to enjoy reading as much as I love writing because I’m having a ball.”

Melinda Rainey Thompson is the author of the SIBA bestseller SWAG: Southern Women Aging Gracefully, and was the founder of The SWAG Newsletter. She holds a master’s degree from the University of Alabama–Birmingham, and taught English and directed the Writing Center at Birmingham–Southern College. She lives in Birmingham with her husband and three children.

The SWAG Life

Melinda Rainey Thompson

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