

# JESSICA HANDLER

NOW AVAILABLE FROM ST. MARTIN'S GRIFFIN

- *Braving the Fire: A Guide to Writing About Grief and Loss*
- Memoirist and writing teacher Jessica Handler available for interviews and workshops

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## ABOUT JESSICA HANDLER *Author of **Braving the Fire** and **Invisible Sisters***

Jessica Handler is the oldest of three sisters. By the time she was 32 years old, she was the only one living. Her sister Susie died of leukemia when she was eight and Jessica was ten. Their sister Sarah died of a rare blood disorder called Kostmann's Syndrome, effectively the opposite of leukemia, when she was 27 and Jessica was 32. Their father was a Civil Rights attorney in Atlanta in the 1960s, and one of the questions each family member lived with was how to help others when they couldn't save their own family.

This story was the basis of Jessica's memoir, *Invisible Sisters*. Named the "Best Memoir of 2009" by *Atlanta Magazine* and "one of eight great southern books" by the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Invisible Sisters* is now listed as one of the "25 Books All Georgians Should Read" by the Georgia Center for the Book.

When touring to promote *Invisible Sisters*, Jessica met readers who told her about who and what they grieved. They told her how they had started writing about their losses and how writing had helped them come to terms with the people they had become. Jessica wrote her next book, *Braving the Fire*, after she started teaching workshops about the challenges and rewards in writing about grief and loss. For *Braving the Fire*, Jessica contributed her own experience of writing a memoir, but went beyond to interview other memoirists about writing about grief and loss. She also talked with journalists about ethics, and with doctors and health practitioners about self-care when grieving.



Photo Credit: Beth Lilly

Jessica earned her MFA in Creative Writing from Queens University of Charlotte (N.C.) and a B.S. in communication from Emerson College in Boston. Her essays and features have appeared on NPR, in *Tin House*, *Drunken Boat*, *Full Grown People*, *Brevity*, *Newsweek*, *The Washington Post*, and *More Magazine*.

Honors for Jessica's writing include residencies at the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, the Hambidge Center for Creative Arts & Sciences, a 2010 Emerging Writer Fellowship from The Writers Center in Bethesda, Maryland, the 2009 Peter Taylor Nonfiction Fellowship at the Kenyon Review Writers Workshop, and special mention for a 2008 Pushcart Prize.

Jessica lives in Atlanta, but frequently travels to teach workshops and give readings. She is tech-savvy—tweeting [@jessicahandler](https://twitter.com/jessicahandler) and ready to Skype with book groups, bloggers and journalists. Learn more at [JessicaHandler.com](http://JessicaHandler.com).