

# PRESS KIT

"If ever there was a book written from and for love, with a hunger to know, to understand, and to heal, this is it." —Abigail Thomas, *New York Times* best-selling author of *A Three Dog Life*

A DAUGHTER'S  
SEARCH FOR TRUTH

ALWAYS  
THERE,  
ALWAYS  
GONE

MARTY ROSS-DOLEN



# SELECTED PRAISE for *ALWAYS THERE, ALWAYS GONE*

“A wise and thoughtful addition to our understanding of the long-term effects of trauma and its transmission from parent to child.”—**NEWPAGES.COM**

“... a touching memoir ... showcases some of the many complexities of loss ... a skillfully written work.”—**KIRKUS REVIEWS**

“If ever there was a book written from and for love, with a hunger to know, to understand and to heal, this is it.”

—**Abigail Thomas, *New York Times* bestselling author**

“How do we conjure our dead, especially if they left this world before we were born? Marty Ross-Dolen asks this question and, with this beautiful book, offers us a map. They are all around us, in each photograph, each saved letter, each thing they built. And what was built by her lost grandparents is iconic, part of the very fabric of America. With *Always There, Always Gone*, Ross-Dolen doesn't just conjure a tragic death. She conjures life.”

—**NICK FLYNN, author of *Another Bullshit Night in Suck City* and *This Is the Night Our House Will Catch Fire***

“... Ross-Dolen traces a legacy of grief while confronting generational silence and loss with daring clarity and a poetic eye. The result is tender and wrenching, a compendium of longing... dazzling...”

—**SONJA LIVINGSTON, author of *Ghostbread***

“... offers proof of the sustaining power of language, even in the face of catastrophic loss.”

—**BETH KEPHART, National Book Award finalist and author of *My Life in Paper: Adventures in Ephemera***

“... [a] wise and moving memoir. Innovative in its approach, *Always There, Always Gone* reminds us of the resilience of the human spirit and the ties that bind.”

—**LEE MARTIN, author of the Pulitzer Prize Finalist *The Bright Forever***

# About the Author



**MARTY ROSS-DOLEN** is a graduate of Wellesley College and Albert Einstein College of Medicine and is a retired child and adolescent psychiatrist. She holds an MFA in Writing from Vermont College of Fine Arts. Prior to her time at VCFA, she participated in graduate-level workshops at The Ohio State University. Her essays have appeared in *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Redivider*, *Lilith*, *Willow Review*, and the *Brevity* Blog, among others. Her essay entitled “Diphtheria” was named a notable essay in The Best American Essays series. She teaches writing and lives in Columbus, Ohio.

Learn more at [martyrossdolen.com](http://martyrossdolen.com)

*Author photo by Kimarie Martin Photography*

# ABOUT

## *ALWAYS THERE, ALWAYS GONE*

In her poignant, genre-bending, grandmother-mother-daughter memoir, *ALWAYS THERE, ALWAYS GONE*, Marty Ross-Dolen mixes 'wisps'—long and short form prose, photos, erasure poetry, and letters—to explore the tragic deaths of her grandparents and the difficulty of growing up with a mother suffering from protracted grief. The fragmented, non-linear narrative reflects Marty's journey grappling with intergenerational trauma.

Marty's family founded the iconic *Highlights for Children* magazine. In 1960, on their way from Columbus, Ohio, to New York City for meetings about newsstand placement, her grandparents were killed in an airline disaster involving the collision of two commercial jets. Marty's mother was fourteen.

For Marty's entire childhood and much of her adulthood, she shielded her mother from further pain even as Marty yearned to know her grandmother. Research and family stories revealed her grandmother to have been a vibrant, bright, confident woman. But it was only by imagining conversations and meetings with her grandmother that Marty felt a connection. In this haunting, loving, and moving memoir, Marty Ross-Dolen pays tribute to a remarkable woman she never knew and lays bare the ways in which grief shapes us all.



*Always There, Always Gone: A Daughter's Search for Truth*  
by Marty Ross-Dolen

She Writes Press, Distributed by Simon & Schuster

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Color photos included



# EXCERPT

## LETTERS

Years ago, I asked my mother to collect any letters that belonged to her mother—those her mother sent or received—after my mother read them herself. Here, I believed, would be my access to my grandmother, through her handwriting, her choice of pen, her choice of stationery, to her voice, her style, her sense of humor. Soon after my grandmother died, her father, my great-grandfather, gathered all his daughter's letters he had saved since she was a child, and eventually they made their way to my mother, years after he had died. Those, as well as letters kept from my grandmother's own collection and ones found over time in the Highlights archives, where my mother is archivist, layer together in large plastic bins in my basement, waiting for me, calling to me.

I have lifted the lid of a plastic bin and taken out these letters at times over the years to read portions of them and, in doing so, say hello to my grandmother and check in with her, not realizing what I was doing exactly. Almost more than read them, I would feel them, rub the aged paper between my fingers, touch the words across the page, know that my grandmother had written them with her Cross pen, folded them with her hands, licked the envelopes and stamps. In this way, only time separates her skin from mine. If she is anywhere on this earth in some form, I believe it is in the folds of these letters, and if the sound of rustling paper had a voice, it would be hers. The musty smell that wafts from the pages as I shuffle through them becomes her perfume. I hold the delicate sheets to my nose, inhaling fully, turning a scent typically reserved for oldness into one of sweetness instead.

# ASK MARTY ROSS-DOLEN

1. What made you decide to write this book?
2. How long did it take you to write the book?
3. Was there anything that surprised you while writing the book?
4. How did your medical background as a child psychiatrist inform your understanding of your childhood experiences as well as your mother's childhood experiences?
5. How did you choose which photos, letters, and other items to include in the memoir?
6. Do you now feel that you have a connection with your grandmother?
7. Was your mother comfortable with your choice to write the book?
8. Do you believe that trauma can be inherited?
9. The style of writing and structure of your book are not typical for memoir but rather considered experimental or non-traditional. Why did you choose to write it this way?
10. Why did you choose a hybrid publisher to publish your book?
11. What do you hope readers take away from reading your memoir?
12. What has allowed *Highlights for Children* to endure?



# About

## *Highlights for Children*

Marty's great-grandparents, Dr. Garry Cleveland Myers Sr. and Caroline Clark Myers, founded the popular children's magazine *Highlights for Children* in 1946. Garry Cleveland Myers Jr. was their youngest of three children, and he and his wife, Mary Martin Myers, were her maternal grandparents. Garry Jr. and Mary served as executives with *Highlights for Children, Inc.* from 1950-1960. The company has continued to be family-owned for nearly eighty years, now in its sixth generation. As of this writing, nearly 1.4 billion magazine issues have been printed and delivered to children, and the company is still going strong today.

# CONNECT

## WITH THE AUTHOR

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## She Writes Press



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