



# Fatal If Swallowed: Reclaiming Creativity and Hope Along the Uncharted Path

*Joan Leaf*

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# Fatal If Swallowed: Reclaiming Creativity and Hope Along the Uncharted Path

*Joan Leof*

## **Fatal If Swallowed: Reclaiming Creativity and Hope Along the Uncharted Path** Joan Leof

Decades before yoga, meditation, journaling, and alternative medicine became mainstream in America, many individuals trusted their intuition on how to chart a path around prescribed choices in life. As told in this gusty, poetic memoir, Joan Leof, a woman who came of age in the 1960s, was among them. Her book explores the many ways we absorb toxic belief systems. The story chronicles how she learned to trust her intuition by rejecting expected social norms such as opting for traditional medical and mental health systems; the cultural expectation that women of her generation, if going to college, should primarily be teachers; and the mindset that choosing creativity over financial security was irresponsible. Courageous decisions soon opened her world in astounding and beautiful ways. Leof garnered healing and inspiration from Dr. C., a pioneering psychiatrist who supported the author's insightful questioning of traditional psychiatry; and Dr. Margaret Stineman, who was born disabled and became an exceptional physician, all while keeping her artistic talents alive. Nature also provided Leof with models of transformation in the form of lotus flowers and the ancient saguaro cacti. In elegant, evocative, affectingly honest prose, Leof clearly captures the sense of possibility and beauty that is companion to a path based on trusting one's intuition. Moving and enlightening, *Fatal If Swallowed* is certain to strike a chord-and perhaps offer a lifeline-to anyone constrained by the paths set up for them by others, allowing them to embark on their own enriching course. Joan Leof takes her readers on an uncharted journey... Is what she faces a gift or a curse? Leof's intensity and passion, her sensitivity and empathy make us want to know more about this extraordinary woman and the edgy choices she made. This is a book you'll want to read more than once. -Gloria Hochman, Author of bestselling book, *A Brilliant Madness: Living With Manic-Depressive Illness* With the guidance of philosophers, writers and other artists, Joan Leof weaves a tapestry of threads that traverse time and space with exquisite poetry and poetic prose that describes the intimate human experience; not just personal, but also social, cultural and transpersonal which should inspire many. -Bernardo A Merizalde, M.D

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