

**A Voice of Her Own**  
**By LISA WILLIAMS**  
**NEW YORK CORRESPONDENT**

As a girl, Virginia Woolf faced overwhelming losses. When she was 13, her mother died suddenly. Soon after, her half-sister and beloved brother died, too. She was sexually abused by her half-brothers. And while she wanted a fine education, she was denied admittance to London's best universities simply because she was a woman.

These experiences caused her to deeply empathize with the outsiders of the world. As a writer and thinker, she sought to understand the causes of prejudice and domination, especially in relation to women.

In her long essay *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf, who died in 1941, urged women to establish financial independence, analyzing the conditions necessary for them to create art. She honored those who had spent their lives cooking, cleaning and caring for others when they may have longed to be writers. Without role models and encouragement, Woolf knew it is difficult for women to accomplish their dreams.

She saw they needed to have money — and rooms — of their own to have the independence to develop their capabilities. She further concluded that men's judgment of women as inferior was based on their own insecurities and fears.

Woolf urged women to write truthfully and in the process create a new vision of reality. This is precisely what she accomplished with her work, which has been translated into many languages. Virginia Woolf may have been a citizen of England, but through her writing she became a global citizen. She believed in the power of art and culture to transform the world.

**WT**