

WRITING PROMPTS

A list of jump-start ideas gathered from the Sarasota Poetry Lab, various writing courses, and the series of books Writing in Inclusive Settings (VSA arts- Kennedy Center). These are primarily for writing poetry but often work just as well for prose.

Write about:

Something you learned today
Compare two things not using “like” or “as”
The first time you saw a new landscape
A time when you experienced profound wonder
Your worst beach memory
A time when you knew the answer
The story of my life in one minute

Writing from observation:

Write from the point of view of the object itself
Look out your window and write a line each about five things you see, then take a word from each line to make a poem
Describe an object three ways: in flowery language; in technical language; from *the series of books “Writing in Inclusive Settings”*.

Topics

“The spice of life” - compare a life experience to a flavor
“After the party” - what happens when the guests go home
“I would rather...” - something you don't want to do so you choose something else
“You are wrong...” - and perhaps write about what's right instead

Prompts from:

a piece of art or a reproduction of favorite work
writing to music
a photograph or cartoon from a book or magazine

Other themes

Your first time for: *driving a car; eating a (now) favorite food; reading a book that changed how you saw things*

From "Writing in Inclusive Settings"

Borrowed lines – *Use a line from a favorite poem to jump start your own poem, either keeping all the words the same or making changes or some words or phrases*

Hello moon/Dear rock – *Take a walk outdoors; choose something you'll write a letter to – as small as a pebble or as large as a distant mountain*

I Never Knew I Loved – *Things we might have forgotten or never put into words - things we were/are not able to do which makes us remember how we loved them*

Of Time and Place – *A "skinny" poem written on a long narrow piece of paper using the word "and" as much as you like, writing very quickly about a time or place important to you*

Other prompts for one, two or three minute poems

"I've been waiting for..."

"I'd like to tell you..."

"I don't know but I've been told..."

Other ways to start

Make a list - *things you have collected/what you did today/things you love or don't – many choices for this – then write from what you've written*

Choose seven random words (*Seven Word Spill*) – *pick them from the dictionary pointing to random words OR chose seven words deliberately from a page in a book or a poem or an article*

Use a favorite saying or aphorism - *"Better safe than sorry"/"Don't let the best become the enemy of the good"/"Life without music wouldn't kill me but why chance it"*

Use the first and/or last line of a favorite poem, writing yours in between

Write from a bumper sticker or T-shirt that you've seen and remembered - *"Art Saves Lives"/"Wildflower Fields Forever"/"Don't believe everything you think!"*

For more information on the "Writing in Inclusive Settings" series or other resources you're welcome to contact me:

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