

# 31 DAYS OF WRITING

Build The Writing Life  
You Long For



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## Welcome to 31 Days of Writing!

These are the prompts I love using for myself and the writers I work with, exploratory sidewriting that can be entry points for going deeper into your work-in-progress, getting unstuck, honing your craft or simply getting into your writer's seat with a dedicated daily practice. They're also great for uncovering new stories, bringing more playfulness and curiosity into your practice, and acting as a bridge between you and your writing practice during seasons of low creative flow or especially busy seasons when it's difficult to concentrate on longer-form work. A prompt-a-day keeps the Inner Critic away! :)

**These are not your average throwaway prompts.** Each exercise is intended to help you work a particular craft / story skill and invites you to build on those skills for real growth. The prompts can also be customized in order to be used again and again in variations that support your needs. Think of this workbook as a writing gym that you can go to daily to work your story muscles.

### A Few Materials To Have On Hand

You can keep it as simple as you wish, but here are a few things that can be fun to have around:

- A deck of tarot or oracle cards
- A deck or two from the story game *Dixit*. This is THE game for writers. I adore it.
- A notebook or journal to explore handwriting the prompts, if you usually work on a computer (bonus points for using a typewriter!). Switching it up can open new pathways in your work.
- A stack of magazines and art books to help you choose characters or images to work with, if you're not working with characters from a WIP.
- A Pinterest board of intriguing story images that you add to and can choose from - this is the gift that keeps on giving
- A stack of regular old playing cards - use a marker to write the prompts on them, and any others you come across, then shuffle the deck and write whatever the universe offers up to you.
- Create an instrumental writing playlist. [Here's my Writer Medicine: Night Magic playlist on Spotify to get you started.](#) Play with writing to music, if you don't usually.

### Best Practices

- If you're really trying to get back to the writer's seat, or stay committed to it when your life is a bit topsy-turvy, or you have trouble setting boundaries around your creativity with yourself and others, then I recommend sitting down to commit to the full 31 days.
- Choose a regular time to write. Have a date and keep it. Early morning might be best, to ensure you get your words in. Any amount of time is good, but decide beforehand what your minimum time is, then stick to it. If you fall off the wagon, be kind to yourself and get back on the next day. The best way to build a habit is to not let too many days go by. (Read *Atomic Habits* - it's great!)
- Use Neil Gaiman rules in the writing cave: you can write or look out the window. That's it.
- Mindful Writing: Turn off your Internet, leave your phone out of the room, work in a quiet place that is private with a closed door - or go to a coffeehouse or library where no one will bug you.
- You can do these prompts in any order, or re-do ones you love. Many of them can be extend over many days, so this is actually way more than 31 days of prompts.
- **Remember: If you show up for your writing, it will show up for you.**

Heather





## Our Trust Fall

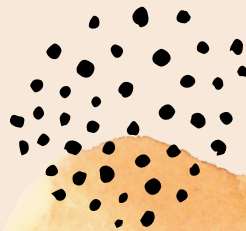
I wish it went without saying, but this workbook is for your eyes only.

Please do not share these materials with your writing friends, or use any of the prompts without permission from yours truly. If there is someone you think will benefit from this work, please encourage them to sign up for the newsletter using the link below - this is our good energetic exchange.

My thanks in advance!

Friend Referral Link:

<http://bit.ly/give-me-flow>



# INSPIRATION

Below are a few words of wisdom to cheer you on for the next 31 days.  
Write one or two on a card in your writing space for extra support.

**Practice until you make it a song that sings you. - Sue Monk Kidd**

**Inspiration exists, but it has to find you working. - Picasso**

**I have to come back to beginner's mind, the first way I thought and felt about writing. In a sense, that beginner's mind is what we must come back to every time we sit down and write...Each time is a new journey with no maps. - Natalie Goldberg**

**Attention is the beginning of devotion. - Mary Oliver**

**We can always begin again. - Sharon Salzberg**

**I exist in continuous creative response to whatever is present.  
- Martha Beck**

**A word after a word after a word is power. - Margaret Atwood**

**Wherever I am, the world comes after me.  
It offers me its busyness. It does not believe  
that I do not want it.  
- Mary Oliver**

**The future is completely open, and we are writing it moment to moment.  
- Pema Chödrön**

**I am rooted, but I flow. - Virginia Woolf**



1. Write about the quality of light coming through your window. As Natalie Goldberg says in *Writing Down the Bones*: "Keep the hand moving." This piece of writing may end up having nothing to do with the light and everything to do with what your subconscious is offering up. You can either work in a stream-of-consciousness mode, or be as thoughtful, attentive, particular, and patient as a poet. Try the prompt with both approaches and see what it gives you.

2. One of my early book deals came out of this simple prompt: "Write the first scene of a book in which a character has a problem." Problems are part of what makes a story GO. Your turn: Write the first thing that pops into your head, just like I did—I saw a jinni stuck in her bottle, and she couldn't get out. Hello, *Exquisite Captive*, the first of what became a fantasy trilogy with HarperCollins.

- You can do this prompt again and again with different problems, or you can work with the same problem, but switch up the genre entirely. What does this problem look like as a western or a space opera or literary fiction? Be sure to stack the obstacles, so that the problem begets more problems. How does your proto pivot and strategize to get what they want? (Be sure they WANT something: Your character should have a clear objective in the scene as they meet the problem head on).

3. This is actually seven separate prompts - bonus! Write about a secret. It could be one you have or hold or one everyone in your family knows but refuses to acknowledge. On the fiction side of things, it could be a secret your character has or is keeping.

- Have them tell the secret in a scene.
- Have them hide the secret in a scene.
- Have them be forced to make a difficult choice, with the secret at its center.
- Write the origin story of the secret.
- Write from the secret's POV. Personify it, like Death in *The Book Thief*.
- Write a poem about the secret. Dance it. (Literally. Dance the secret.)

4. This is one of the most powerful exercises you'll ever do: **The Objective Correlative** is a term John Gardner gets into in his great craft text, *The Art of Fiction*. Basically, you use metaphor and description to convey a character's emotion and the tone of the scene. A classic example would be showing a character's sadness or internal confusion by choosing to have the weather be literally stormy. The storm is giving us information about their internal state and creates a very different tone than a sunny day would. **This is what people mean when they say show, don't tell.** It's all about specificity, the particularity of your book's people, places, and time.

**If you want to take your craft to the next level, this is the best possible way to do it.** Gardner's book offers more exercises on this concept, as well, and I highly recommend picking it up. You can customize this exercise with new scenarios and tones, as needed.

- Write a short scene in which your character's car breaks down. Let's work with the concept of sanctuary and its opposite, a dangerous environment.
- You will write this scene twice. In the first version, your character stumbles upon a stand of trees after her car breaks down. Write this so that it's NOT a sanctuary. Perhaps it's in a bad part of town, or near her ex's house, or in a place where a known killer was recently seen. Maybe she's late for an interview, or injured. Anything goes.



- Use the environment to convey her internal turmoil--stress about the car, possible fears of being alone, perhaps she's going through a divorce, whatever. You know your story, so make it work. Consider weather, descriptors, language, tone. Try to avoid using adjectives and instead work with specific images and all five senses. Avoid the kind of oversharing TMI choreography about bodily functions used to convey emotional states. Kill all cliches.
- Now, write the scene again, but THIS TIME the stand of trees is a sanctuary. What changes? How do they see this space differently? How does it open up and expand them? What healing takes place there? Same as above in terms of word choice.

5. Describe a character, stranger, figure in a tarot card, a person in a magazine photo or on Pinterest *without using any adjectives*. Now do this with an object. Now a place. Now a feeling. Now a moment. Try to use "carnal" details, as author Mary Karr speaks about in *The Art of Memoir*: wonderfully vivid, juicy, sensory, and specific. Again, kill all clichés. Revise until it's fresh and you.

6. An endowed object is an item that holds powerful meaning for a character. It could be the ring their dead mother gave them that always reminds them that alcoholism runs in their blood too. It could be the friendship bracelet the friend they are now on the outs with made them. Or their lucky jeans. Endowed objects are a great way to jump into some interesting backstory territory for a character, but it can also give you lots of story ideas for the book itself. Think of an object that could be meaningful to your protagonist (or give a totally imaginary brand new character something special). Now, answer these questions:

- a. What is the object?
  - b. Where did it come from?
  - c. Why is it important to them?
  - d. How would they feel if they lost it?
- e. Now, write a scene in which they lose that object. Or they decide to get rid of it. Or they find it, after having lost it years ago. See what this opens up for you about this character, secondary characters, and the book. Write a scene in which the object plays a part.

7. Begin with "I remember..." Now, write. (You can do this as yourself or your character).

8. From my buddy, Bookflow founder Lisa Papademetriou: "For Better or Worse"

- A plot is an arrangements of moments in which things get better or worse for one or more of your characters. Take that problem you created in #2 (or build a new one), and—for thirty seconds—imagine as many ways as possible that the situation could get worse.
- Then—for the next thirty seconds—list as many ways as possible in which the situation could get better.
- Finally, choose one episode from each list and write a scene in which the situation initially worsens, and ends at a moment at which it gets better, or vice versa (initially improves, only to end in disaster).



9. Pick up a book of poetry or a play – anything will do. Choose a line as your prompt. Or, use one of my favorites, the Apothecary in *Romeo and Juliet*: “My poverty but not my will consents.” This prompt is the gift that keeps on giving because you could literally do this every day as a warm-up.

10. Write a list of all your current obsessions. Now, write a list of all your proto's obsessions. Circle where you two agree. Now, write a scene in which the obsession plays a central part.

11. Write a list about everything that pisses you off. Write a list about everything that pisses your proto off. Again, choose one that you share. Have your protagonist in a situation where this thing happens. Try it once where they are the person that does this thing, and once as the person who has this thing done to them.

12. Word / Question List: I learned this from my MFA mentor, Amanda Jenkins. Write a character or place or moment's title at the top of the page and then, with a stream-of-consciousness approach, write any words or phrases that come to mind. When you're through, see if any words surprised you, and if they can help you gain some insight into your character or story. Why did that word come up? How are the words on the list connected?

- Take your insights and see if you can write or revise a scene with this newfound knowledge. I also like to do this with questions. I write a question I have about my book or character, then I write everything that comes to mind. You can use a timer, if that helps, or mindmap instead of using a list.


13. The smell of your childhood home. Consider playing with white space on the page to work with emotional beats and voice. Let the prose breathe. Slow down. Take us there with vivid sensory details. Be as specific and particular as you can. Try describing smell without scent adjectives by using simile and metaphor: *Home smells like a rushing river, fleeting and cold.* Or: *Home is a moon, distant, with no signs of life.*

14. Take a scene or chapter from your WIP and re-write the whole thing in verse. **This is my #1 way to make a scene more vivid when it feels flat or emotionally bankrupt.** Why? Poetry is excellent for working with emotion and sensory details. It cuts to the heart of things. In approaching a tricky scene—and especially one in which you don't feel connected to your characters or the emotional heart of the moment—prose poetry just might be the key you need to unlock some important information, or writing, to get you there. You don't need to be a poet to do this. Just play, have fun, explore. Put some music on, write by hand, light some sage - whatever!

15. Choose a tarot or oracle card – or use cards from the game *Dixit*. Notice the connections between the cards. Write the story you see. Rearrange them. Tell the story a new way. You can also do some mindmapping before writing to get a sense of what might happen.

- Challenge yourself by writing the whole thing as a tweet, as a text conversation, as a scholarly paper, a news article - any kind of constraint or playful structure. This is a great way to play with voice. What opens up when you use a different organizing principle for your words?

16. In the style of John Green's *The Anthropocene Reviewed*, write a review of something using a first person, memoir approach. A review as memoir. Anything under the sun will do: Bic pens. Mouse traps. Target. The Olympics. At the end, decide how many stars you give it. Include at least one personal anecdote from your life and at least one universal application. Get deep and personal. Tear our hearts out.



17. What do your characters take for granted? This one's all about world-building, but it can help you understand your protagonist better, too. What your characters take for granted says so much about them and their world and it's a great way to create a genre fiction or historical universe without all that info dumping. For example, if you're writing a sci-fi and they DON'T take clean water for granted, that tells your readers we are solidly in the future in a show-don't-tell fashion.

I cribbed this question from author David Mitchell, who says establishing what your characters take for granted is a great way to help your readers understand the difference between their modern world and the world that you are building. Writing realism? Use this question to go deeper into your character's heart: WHO do they take for granted? What about their life do they take for granted? Bonus points if you write a scene in which you take those things away from them. See what they do. Guess what? You just worked on plot and character SIMULTANEOUSLY.

18. What do you fear most?

- How does this fear manifest in your body?
- How does it disrupt your usual thought process? (For example, does your mind go totally blank?) Do fight, flight, or freeze?
- Now, what does your main character fear most?
- Do they engage in flight, fight, or freeze and how does that look for them?
- Holding lightly to the physical sensation you experience when you're feeling fear, write a scene in which your main character is feeling fear. We're doing some method-acting style writing here, lending our own experience to make our fictional character's life ring true. Hers might manifest differently, and that's okay: but see if your felt experience of fear can inform putting her felt experience of fear on the page. Don't be nice. Really scare the shit out of your proto.

19. This exercise has three parts.

- First, create a playlist for your story—think of it as your book's soundtrack. No story? No problem. Make a playlist of the vibe you're feeling right now to inspire some raw, personal writing. Want to write an anti-hero story? Find the most villainous music you can. Once you have your playlist, sit down, close your eyes, and let your imagination fly as you listen to it. You can also work with one single song on repeat that's really working for you right now.
- Jot down images, scene possibilities, feelings, setting, action scenes—anything that comes to mind.
- Now, write the scene that has come most clearly to you, with or without the music playing in the background.
- I like to do this as warm-up for my writing sessions so that I'm in the emotional space of my book. Before a scene, I listen to a song, close my eyes, and enter that territory. Then, I write from that place.

20. Another from my gal pal Lisa P: Every character has a worldview. Some see the world as a place full of magic. Some see the world as full of danger.

- Create a character with a definite worldview. Now, imagine the moment in which this view was formed. What happened? Who was there? What conclusions did the character draw from this event? (The conclusions might or might not be correct.)
- My addition to this prompt: Write a scene in which this worldview is challenged. Does your character dig their heels in, or change? Who challenges them? What's at stake?





21. Write a travel guide in proper travel guide fashion of your book's world. If you don't have a WIP, write a travel guide about anything: your neighborhood, a tumultuous friend group, the group chat you can't get out of. This is especially great for those of you writing memoir or fantasy, but it works for everything. Talk about language, culture, food, shopping, accommodations, entertainment, history. What is a travel guide to the Catholic church, to the PTA, to your family? You can write a whole series of travel guides, couldn't you?

22. For this exercise, we'll be working with the concept of "psychic distance." Psychic distance is the amount of time that has passed between the events of the story and when your protagonist is actually narrating it (or, your narrator is telling it). A book in the present tense has little to no psychic distance, since the narrative is taking place in real time. But a story about a young woman's life told by her eighty-year-old self has a LOT of psychic distance. Take a scene from your WIP. Choose three different psychic distances to explore and rewrite the scene based on that psychic distance. You'll learn much from this about your character and story.

23. Write a scene in which your character dabbles in magical thinking.

- Do they believe they're responsible for their loved one's death because they secretly wished them dead that one time?
- Or maybe they're convinced they're going to lose the tennis match because they didn't wear the charm their mother, a famous athlete, always wore for her big games?
- Link the magical thinking to your protagonist's desire or misbelief. Have it mess them up big time. Or, have them be affected by another person's magical thinking. Maybe it can deeply change the course of their life - and they are not happy about it.
- Their lover leaves them not because they want to, but because they had a prophetic dream that if they stayed together, one of them would die. Their father makes them late for an important audition because he indulged in his own weird magical thinking...or is it OCD?

24. Desire Mapping For Writers Part One

### Your Protagonist's Core Desired Feelings

Using self-development author Danielle LaPorte's Desire Mapping system as our inspiration, we're going to look at what your protagonist's Core Desired Feelings are. Basically, what are 3 to 5 words that describe their deepest longing of how they want to feel in their lives? Do they want to feel EASE or SANCTUARY or COMPASSION or VITALITY? Hint: Doing this work on yourself first will help you understand the concepts more deeply and get better results for both you and your proto.

You can read *The Desire Map* (highly recommend!) or just wing it with the free resources for words on her website and begin listing all the possible words your proto could gravitate toward. Break out your thesaurus. You want to narrow it down (3-5 words). You might need to interview them, journal as them, or do other exploratory work to get at the words that fit juuuuust right:

<https://www.thedesiremap.com/core-desired-feeling-themes>



## 25. Desire Mapping For Writers Part Two

The main question Desire Mapping asks is, "What will you do to feel the way you want to feel?" Traditional goal setting tells you to first set your goal, then work like hell to get it, even if you're miserable the whole time you're running to the finish line. With that model, we're often left unsatisfied when we get what we thought we so desperately wanted. This is because we're often choosing what we think we should want. With desire mapping, you align your feelings with your goals. You look first at how you want to feel, then you set goals and make decisions based on whether or not they present an opportunity to feel the way you want to feel. The CDFs act as your compass. You move toward YES. This is goal-setting and dreaming from the inside out, rather than the other way around. Much more yummy, no?

- Think about the current scene you're working on (and you can do this for the whole book, as well).
- Knowing your proto's Core Desired Feelings, consider the choices they have to make in this scene. What will they do to feel the way they want to feel?
- Or how will they DENY what they want to feel?
- Now, create obstacles in getting what they want. How will they pivot and strategize throughout the scene to feel the way they want to feel? Don't forget stakes!

26. Write a haiku. You might even want to begin a mindful practice of writing a haiku every day for a month. See how it helps you pay attention. This is peak mindfulness for writers. Notice how it encourages an economy of words and a deepening of expression. A connection to nature. For some wonderful examples, see the gorgeous book *Moon in the Pines: Zen Haiku* (Clements).

27. Your first kiss.

28. The Elephant in the Room: Working with powerful objects

As you work, don't forget what I call your proto's "Keyring of Desire" in my Unlock Your Novel system: Desperate Desire, Misbelief, & Unconscious Need (aka: the wound that needs to be healed by the end in order for your proto to overcome their misbelief).

- First: Choose a space that your protagonist spends time in, or that a particular scene you're working with takes place in. Close your eyes and take a moment to see the room in as much detail as possible. Notice the objects in it, especially. When you're ready, notice which object feels "hot" to you - like it has a story attached to it.
- Open your eyes and jot down as many words, thoughts, images, bits of dialogue that come to you. Why might this object be important? Is there a secret attached to it? A sinister backstory? Does it mean something to your proto or their family? Is it a clue in a murder case?
- When you're ready, write a scene in which the object is central. Perhaps your proto wants to hide it, steal it, open it, touch it. What are the stakes associated with the object? What are the obstacles your proto faces in relationship to their connection to it? How does it trigger them?
- If you're feeling stuck, you can employ timed lists and write down everything that could possibly happen with each object in the room. The timed aspect keeps your inner critic in check.



29. I call this exercise "Pick Up The Pen." The goal is to get you writing somatically, really working with your own body to produce more vivid work on the page. It's also a great way to practice working with voice. You can try this in variations: different voices, ages, genders, eras.

- Pick up a pen.
- Now set it down. Note any physical / sensory sensations you had.
- Think about what you're going to write with the pen - anything will do. Notice internal reactions.
- Okay, now pick up the pen. Don't write anything yet. Notice the feeling in this beat.
- Set it down. Again, note the sensations. Were you hesitating? Nervous. What does it feel like?
- Now, recall the last time you wrote something that was hard to write, but you had to do it. Wait until that memory is very clear. Go there. Be in that moment.
- Pick up the pen. Wait. Decide you're not going to write this thing after all. Or decide to go for it.
- Note the sensations as you set down the pen, or put it to paper.

I hope in this exercise you were able to see the physical changes within you as your motivations for picking up and setting down the pen changed. Most were likely quite subtle. Could you put those into rich experiences into narrative detail while in the skin of your protagonist?

See the difference:

- *Jane picked up the pen and began the letter that would change her life: Dear John...*
- *Jane stared down the the pen. The cheap stationary from her dead mother's desk drawer. Choice. There was always a choice. A train sounded in the distance--going somewhere far away, and fast. Now the pen was in her hand--chipped nail polish, no ring, calluses from all those double shifts. Was it wrong to write this with a pen stolen from the doctor's office? To hell with it. She formed the words, ink wounding the page. She couldn't erase this. Didn't want to. Dear John...*

Now, you might think the second example is too purple for you, and that's fine. Not every single action needs lace curtains. But I wanted you to see both how the first tells and the second shows, but also how the reader is given an opportunity to get in Jane's skin in the second example, learn things about her beyond the letter. We feel the weight and gravity of her task, her uncertainty, her social class. This one makes the moment work on multiple levels, the words earning their place. This is expressed through the senses and through an acutely realized physical action with a strong justification and interiority behind it.

- Think of a specific action your character might do. Perhaps they need to pick up a sword or a baby or clean up vomit. Go through the above steps as you work towards writing the moment. Be as vivid, carnal, and specific as possible. Consider your work with the objective correlative and the other exercises you've worked with this month.
- Try writing this in different voices or ages or eras - what changes with these adjustments?



30. One of the best ways to get some alignment and cultivate flow is to have a healthy relationship to your writing. We're often pretty tough on our craft and ourselves, in combative relationships that do nothing to cultivate the inner expansiveness needed for flow. A big part of unwinding out of those tight, constricted ways of being is to lean in to some gratitude. Your writing is a true and stalwart companion who will be with you through thick and thin. It's good to get really intentional about honoring that. Let the warm fuzzies flow!

- Write a love letter to your writing.
- Tell it why you're devoted to it. Why you adore it. Why you believe in it and its power to transform you and the world. Ask your writing to be your teacher: about yourself, the world, and your place in the universe. Thank your writing for its presence in your life and for all the ways it has shown up for you and been the harbor in the storm.

31. Want to adapt this exercise for your WIP?

- Have your proto write a letter similar to the one above to something in their life that is their anchor. It could be their hobby, their job, their coping mechanism. You'll learn some interesting things about their relationship to this thing they depend on.
- Next, write a list of all the ways you might take away or threaten this relationship. What are the possible obstacles your character could encounter? How will they fight to maintain their hold on this thing? In what ways will they realize this thing is good or bad for them?
- Note: You can make this thing a person, but then you'll want to look at ways your character might realize they have an unhealthy dependency on that person.
- Now write a scene in which your proto's anchor is taken away or threatened. Conversely, you can write about them discovering this thing or person that anchors them and the resulting relief.

**Congratulations! Look at you: 31 days of writing in the books. Whether they were all in a row or over a longer period of time, you should be proud of yourself for holding space for your words. Take a few moments to journal about how it felt to do this work and jot down anything you need to release or invite into your writing practice. Here are a few companions for your continuing journey...**





**BONUS!**

## Flax Golden Tales

I decided to save one of my favorites for last, since there is so much mileage you can get out of it:

Perhaps you've stumbled upon author Erin Morgenstern's Flax Golden Tales after devouring her glorious novel, *The Night Circus*.

If not, you're in for a treat. Over several years she created dozens and dozens of short, flash fiction tales that she posted to her website, each inspired by a photograph her friend took. The rules were simple: using the photograph as inspiration, she then wrote a ten-sentence tale. It could be about anything. They weren't necessarily connected. Each tale exists, it seems, in its own universe.

We're going to be doing some work inspired by this concept. To get a sense of what this flash fiction looks like, head over to her site to see examples and read the tales yourself (They are wonderful and a delightful way to use your time - reading is part of a writer's job!):

<http://erinmorgenstern.com/category/flax-golden/>

### A Story About Trust

Below is a photograph taken by the famed Soviet photographer, Lev Borodulin, of a diver leaping into the unknown.

For this exercise, we're going to look at your protagonist's relationship to trust. Using the photograph as a jumping off point (ha! pun intended) and the spirit of the Flax Golden Tales, you'll be writing a ten-sentence story about a leap they could, won't, or might make.

It could be that your character sees this photograph somewhere and it prompts something (perhaps they wish they were brave or elegant or powerful, like this diver). Maybe they have an action they need to take, but they don't trust themselves or another person. What is the trust fall they will or won't take? Where are they being challenged to take a leap of faith, or to trust that they've put in the work and will execute a perfect dive in their given situation?

Alternatively, you can simply do what Erin Morgenstern does: Use the photograph to inspire any kind of flash fiction story your writer's heart desires. Best to just, um, dive in. See what comes out.

Trust yourself.

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## Other Ways To Work With This Bit Of Flash Fiction

### As A Warm-Up For Your Writing Session

Jump onto Pinterest and create a Flax Golden board of a random assortment of photos that strike your fancy. Then, choose one and write a ten-sentence tale. You can write random ones in different voices, explore new stories and characters. Or, use these as side writing for your book, to prep for an upcoming scene.

### Go Deeper Into Your Character or Story When You're Stuck

Rather than banging your head against the keyboard, jump onto your collection of photos and choose one that sparks some interest in you. Use it to explore the part of your story you're stuck in. (Pro Tip: Create the collection of photos BEFORE you begin a writing session, otherwise choosing the photos will become a form of procrastination.)

### Journal About What Came Up For You

After doing this work, you might want to grab your journal and go even deeper into what the flash fiction brought up for you about your WIP. Maybe a line or moment or image really snagged you. Write about that and see what it opens up for you in your story.

### Share Your Stories

Be brave and put your story up on your blog. Or tweet it. Or read it out loud to someone. Trade with a writing friend. Make it a bed time story. Have fun. And trust that your words belong in the world, that there is someone out there who needs to read them, and that you have stories worthy of being written and read.

...и др. для тех же...  
...не только...  
...к тому же...  
...в результате...  
...всего (4,0 м.с.г.).

# NOTES

## Lotus & Pen Perks

Subscribers to my newsletter, the Lotus & Pen, get access to a host of writing support, including:

- The Unlock Your Novel Workbook: My unique character-centered approach to plot and story.
- The Get Clear Workbook, updated annually and chock-full of exploratory questions that will help you Get Clear about your writing practice, goals, and next steps.
- The Rough Draft Workbook: A series of questions meant to be repeated each month so that you can track your writing progress and get intentional about areas for growth and support needed.
- My #1 Flow Secret: Tons of journaling prompts to work through whatever is coming up.
- Sidewriting exercises: I often share downloads of new sidewriting prompts in my monthly newsletter or during our Well Second Sunday Gatherings. One of my favorites is the First Line Workout from the January 2021 session, accessible via the Well Archive on the Perks page. You get the archive too - craft and process lectures to download and work with.
- Twice-monthly writing advice in your inbox, which often includes journal prompts, craft tips, thought work, mindfulness support, and more.
- [Meditation downloads to boost flow and focus.](#)
- [Join the newsletter here.](#) (The portal link is always on the newsletter, but I recommend bookmarking it for easy access).

## Recommended Reading

- For loads of delicious writing prompts and practice on a deep craft level, my go-to is *Poemcrazy* by Susan Goldsmith Wooldridge.
- Natalie Goldberg's *Writing Down The Bones* is a must! Her "writing practice" method is wonderful and will support much of the foundation you've laid here with our 31 Days of Writing.
- There are a number of fantastic exercises at the back of John Gardner's *The Art of Fiction*, most notably on the objective correlative and psychic distance. It's also a great craft text.
- Twyla Tharp's *The Creative Habit* is filled with playful exercises that range from writing to brainstorming to falling down every imaginable rabbit hole of wonder.

## Quick Tips To Sustain Your Daily Writing Practice

- Remember, these prompts can be used again and again. Customize them to suit your needs, brainstorm ways to expand them further, and work with combining them in ways that allow your skills to build on each other.
- If possible, write at the same time each day. Make it non-negotiable.
- Keep using Neil Gaiman rules and create a writing space that's inviting and consistent.
- Involve anyone who lives with you in the process by setting healthy boundaries around your creativity.
- Keep an ongoing list of sidewriting work like this nearby. If you feel stuck on your WIP, grab it and work with one that might help solve the story problem you're having.
- There is no "right" amount of time to write. The important thing is to decide on the minimum amount of time you will sit (in meditation we call this "holding your seat"), even if your inner critic comes a-knocking.
- Have a set of tools handy for when self-doubt and other gnarly folk come visiting when you're in the writing seat. Work with them on the spot.
- Grab a deck of cards and write all your sidewriting exercises on them. Shuffle and play whatever hand you are dealt as a warm-up. Other good warm-ups are meditation, reading a poem, or some other ritual that gets you into a flow mindset.
- **Work with me!** Helping writers build the writing life they long for is my jam: a course or one-on-one work will set you up just fine. See below for more info.





Are you looking for a writing coach to help you on your journey?

## Let's Connect



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**Heather Demetrius** is a critically acclaimed author, writing coach, editor, and teacher. Her books include *Little Universes*, *Code Name Badass*, and *I'll Meet You There*. Thousands of writers meditate with Heather on her Mindfulness For Writers Insight Timer page. She is the founder of The Well, a women's community and resource for writer wellness. Visit [www.heatherdemetrius.com](http://www.heatherdemetrius.com) to learn more about Heather, her books, and her offerings for writers.

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