

## Journal Writing

Nearly all great creative ideas began as an idea jotted down on a napkin, in a yellow notepad, in a dream journal. The point of journals is to give yourself uninhibited space to let your ideas emerge. I recommend that you write in your journals every day for a minimum of fifteen minutes. You can write anything you like—a summary of the day—a memory—an idea for a short story (or the story itself)—song lyrics you enjoy, plans for a trip you'd like to take—anything you like. Most important: Journal writing will help you to develop a writer's eye. Writers are careful observers of the world and human nature, above all. Twice during the semester I will collect journals and skim through them to assess your overall *devotion* and effort.

If you need some suggestions for daily topics, here's a brief list:

--Rather than summarizing the day's events, which can often be rather mundane, try to zero in on one observation you made that day. What is one beautiful thing you saw? What is one thing that caused you anxiety?

--Describe a small object in some detail (a leaf, a rock, a beetle)

--Describe a place you visited that day or some other day. Can you convey how you feel about this place by the details you choose to describe?

--Write a letter to your five-year old self. What would you tell yourself ?

--Write a letter to your future self

--imagine the world from someone else's point of view: your dog, an elderly woman, a young child, a bird, etc.

--Try to capture the essence of your dreams (note: the more you do this, the more you will remember, guaranteed)

--record one of your dreams. Write about it like it's a short story. Try writing about yourself in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person for objectivity

--record one of your dreams as if it is a story that will appear in the newspaper. Write about the fantastic and strange in a dry, objective style

--Take one persistent memory and describe it as clearly as possible. Then explore why the memory keeps coming back.

--Describe a weird thing that happened to you that day. Why was it weird?

--Write a sketch of a person you know

--Write about a phobia/fear

--Write on a subject like the traditional essayists: "On Marriage"; "On Love"; "On Smells"; "On Friendship"; "On Death", etc.

--Take a strange story from the news headlines and contemplate its meaning

--Take a sad/moving story from the news headlines and write a poem about it

--Take a bizarre story from the news headlines and write a short-short story about it