

Experiments with Language, Chance, and States of Consciousness

- Write in the dark or with your computer screen turned all the way down.
- Write in the same **place** and/or **time** for a week, month, year. Observe a plant, the beach, your kitchen, your garden, etc over that time.
- Write 2 lines just as you wake up in the morning and/or just before going to sleep. Collage these into a poem.
- Write in hypnogogic / hypnopompic states of mind (states between sleeping & waking or waking & sleeping) – see *The 3:15 Experiment*
- Mistranslate a poem (translate a work from a language you don't understand)
- Go for a walk / drive and notice everything blue or green or soft or hard, etc.
- Write a Collated Narrative: combine outside “stories” (book, TV, radio, sporting event). Write in as many different directions as possible.
- RECORD YOUR DREAMS! Propose questions for your night's dreaming.
- Try to record EVERYTHING for an hour, day, week, month (see *Studying Hunger* by Bernadette Mayer)
- Use objects of nature to dictate your poem – place a rock / leaf over a journal entry & draw an outline
- Cut up letters or postcards from friends and mix them with your lines of poetry. Cut up newspapers or magazines and randomly draw lines out. Cut up your own poetry and randomly draw lines. Work with the elements of “chance” and “surprise” as well as manipulation as “things” as tangibles.
- Use a series of objects given (or picked from about your house at random) and take their stories places in poems. Turn a list of objects from someone who has died, or someone very close to you, into a poem.
- Give yourself a writing prompt for a day or longer (eg every time you hear a dog bark, car honk, someone yell, etc.)
- Elements: earth/air/fire/water, imagine the modern world explained in these terms
- Try writing while thinking in syllables.
- **Present Beau:** write a poem for a person only using the letters included in their name. Check out <http://wordsmith.org/anagram/> for assistance.
- **+5 (or +7, etc):** rewrite a poem of yours or another persons (or a piece of well-known literature) replacing nouns (or verbs or adjectives) with words from the dictionary by counting down 5 words from the original.
- Write only using letters that do not go above or below the line of writing (a, c, e, i, etc)

- Rewrite one of your own poems by replacing it with text from another poem or piece of Literature (first noun replaces first noun, etc)
- Using a line, poem, or dream, deconstruct/replace the words using an etymological dictionary. Do the same with the new set of words. Do it again!
- **Found Poetry!** Make lists from names of paintings in an exhibit, names from spines of books, movie titles, etc.
- Write poems by reading **down** a particular passage in a book (instead of across)
- List poems: “I Remember” ala Joe Brainard, “With your eyes of...” ala Ginsberg, “Respondez,” see Anne Waldman, Sei Shonagon, or *The List Poem*, by Larry Fagin (Teachers and Writers). Begin each line of a poem with the phrase “I think,” “I am,” “I know,” or “I do” (or the negative).
- Imitate Joe Brainard’s Imaginary Still-lifes: “I close my eyes and see...” – describe every detail, placement, color, as if looking at the “painting.”
- Start a collaborative writing experiment through e-mail, through snail mail, through ritual.
- Write from another person’s voice/perspective ala Patricia Smith’s “Medusa” or “Olive Oil” or any of Ai’s poems. Write from another animals or objects point of view. A rock. An onion.
- Invent your own words and define them in/as poems. See <http://www.dictionaryofobscuresorrows.com/>
- Pick an object and write a poem about it in 1 minute. Try 2 or 3 minutes. Pick several objects and jump from one to the next for 1 minute each.
- Write a creation poem for an object or animal.
- Pick an object or place and write for 5 minutes about it from a place of LOVE. Now write about the same object for 5 minutes from a place of FEAR.
- Write a poem looking in the mirror
- Write a poem speaking in the language of an inanimate object.
- Write 20 Sonnets, each one responding to the previous one.
- Interview objects, write down the questions in advance.
- Synesthesia: write a poem that mixes up your senses. Smell music, feel colours, taste sounds.