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PROCESS: GOAL-SETTING

Many writers find it helpful to set both large and small goals for a writing project or practice. The large goals (finishing a book, for example) provide continuity to each writing session; the small goals (finishing a poem and sending it out) give a sense of tangible accomplishment on a daily or weekly basis. Together, these provide fuel for a writer to create a sustainable practice.

TRY THIS: Write down one large and twelve small writing goals. Post them near your writing spot.

VENUE: WAG'S REVUE

An online literary quarterly “of poetry, essays, fiction, and interviews with waggish luminaries of our day,” *Wag’s Revue* has garnered national attention since its founding in 2009. It pays its writers \$100 per piece. (wagsrevue.com)

PROMPT: “It was my ignorance that saved me.” (6 min.)

2

PROCESS: SALIVATING AT THE DESK

Ivan Pavlov, Russian physiologist, trained dogs to salivate at the ring of a bell by first teaching the dogs to associate that ring with food. Writers can use this “conditioned reflex” to create inspiration by associating a single sensory thing—a flavor of tea, warm socks, a song, a certain chair and desk, the lighting of a candle—with writing. Once your body associates this sensory cue with creative work, your brain will “salivate” for writing when it recognizes that cue.

TRY THIS: Choose a sensory cue. Each time you write this week, first give yourself the cue, and then sit down and write something short and fun: writing to a prompt, a poem, a character sketch.

VENUE: THE IDAHO REVIEW

The Idaho Review has received national awards (including The O. Henry Award and The Pushcart Prize) for its short stories. They read unsolicited writing from Sept. 5 – Apr. 15. (idahoreview.org)

PROMPT: “_____ was not designed to grow here.” (7 min.)

PROCESS: USING THE UNIT SYSTEM

Time expands to fit what we ask of it. If we have eight minutes, we can write for eight minutes. If we have an hour we can write for an hour. But sometimes too-long chunks of time can feel as endless as the ocean. And waiting until we have hours means that creative work gets postponed.

TRY THIS: Remedy this by using the unit system. Write for ten minutes—no more. Give yourself a prompt so that you are not just floundering in the waves. Then try 15 or 25 minutes. Then two sets of 20 minutes, with a short break. See how much you can accomplish in a day.

VENUE: AIRPLANE READING

Publishing “a kind of ongoing anthology about air travel,” *Airplane Reading* accepts and posts creative nonfiction stories year-round, and each week they select one to feature on their website. (airplanereading.org)

PROMPT: “It came this close to working out just as we planned.” (10 min.)