

LET IT FLOW - Flow-writing

The first thing I noticed was the different smells and the noise of cows, then iron rails, uneven stones, wind chill, mud, cold hands, cows staring, munching, teeth, how big, wind in my face, cows munching, noise like crunching, all through strong farm smell. Cows, it was in the air.

Marilyn

Today I am a daffodil, very bright and colourful, always swaying and shining, whatever the weather, I have roots you can't see, leaves big as a piece of toast.

Today I am a sea-weedy rock, the seaweed changes its place, it makes faces.

Lines from Yarmouth and Shalfleet Primary Schools

This activity works as a warm up and as a way of dealing with the anxiety of not being able to think of what to write. It's especially useful at the start of a session for all writers, whether new or experienced. It's important to emphasize that they can't get it wrong and that they don't have to share their work unless they want to. Sometimes the writing can be developed into a poem or story, sometimes just a word or a line they like can be used in another piece of writing.

Give the group the following guidelines and a sentence or phrase to start them off:

- Don't stop. If you get stuck you can repeat the previous line again or write I am stuck... This will get you going again. Keep your pen moving whatever happens.
- Don't think/worry.... It doesn't matter if you write what you think is nonsense.
- Don't rhyme. Rhyming tends to stop the flow!
- Write for 5 to 10 minutes. Then read what you have written, underlining anything you especially like.

Starter Lines

Today I am...
The first thing I noticed was...
At the top of the house...
In the distance I could see...
On the river bank...
Underneath...

Many writers practise flow-writing when stuck. Virginia Woolf used a similar technique. She said: "*Sometimes you find the diamonds in the dust-heap*".

Lydia Fulleylove