

Day 19

Today, consider polyphony and tonal range. What are all the voices that combine into your writing so far, whether strands of your own, or appearing via the mouths of characters? Does another voice need to join? Does the balance need to change?

Using the planetary metaphor, follow these questions by imagining something incoming on an intersecting course with what you have made. Perhaps you access this tonal range by imagining a crash that causes your own accreting body of writing to split open and bring to the surface what was previously muffled.

Or perhaps you imagine it as something that lands on your writing, the way much of earth's water came from icy asteroids. This thing merges with your writing, becomes one of its elements and influences its future without conflict or breaking what was already there; it adds itself to the number.

Words: Listening Series

Listen for a word to form in your mind's ear, then write it down and listen for the next. Before you start, set a length—a half page, perhaps. Try to hear the next word in your mind before it reaches your hands. Pay attention to how you usually experience the traffic between your mind's voice and your moving hands. Do you see the words you are about to write? Do your hands seem to know what your mind doesn't? However you write in your normal pattern, try to take this one at a slow, meditative speed, luxuriating in the mind's ear and the still hand. Give each word ample receiving time, so that you're not listening for full sentences or even phrases but just for single words. Let them be like beads strung on a wire; don't let the grammar of the sentence operate in any kind of predictive way.

Tuning: Edge of the Field

Use the tuning time to ask yourself, either through a timed writing or a simple list format, what else is at the edges of your vision or interest that you want to make space for in the last third of this accretion practice. Keep in mind that this could also be a new approach to something that's already in your writing.

Generator: Hearing Another Voice

Write a description of the room you are writing in. Root yourself in a clear first-person voice (though feel free to role-play here; you don't have to write as yourself). Then, as if scanning with a radio dial along a continuum of time (far past, far future) or distance, see if you can tune in the voice of someone else, equally interested in this scene. Allow yourself to slide or pivot into this voice. Soften the transitional edges.