

Day 7

Today, write by editing, sliding around, rearranging. Knit, swap, delete. Knead, recalibrate. Pare. Don't write any new words except as needed to solve the grammar of your newly formed sentences. Reduce your wordcount.

If you are hungry to expand, that's okay, but be patient. Start by compressing and reworking the material you have so far and then find a fresh point in it, which your elision work has opened up, from which to radiate out along a new path.

Warmup: Two-Tone Étude

Write a tiny narrative of a fictional event that uses only words beginning with two letters of your choice. Borrow a bit of letter-color synesthesia and imagine that, for example, all words beginning with e are a purply grey-blue, and all words beginning with j are bright orange, and use only words beginning with e or j: make a tiny two-tone story. Let the difficulty of the constraint maximize the weird, free-range exactitude of the chronicle you can tell. This is a minute list in disguise; the point is to wake up your vocabulary.

Tuning: Week Reflection

Reflect on your week of writing. What surfaced that surprised you? What approaches to the practice (time of day, duration of session, writing implements, spaces to work in, warmups or no, etc.) have worked for you? Write a memo to yourself about what you learned in this first week that you can carry forward into the next, both in terms of what you are bringing into focus within your writing, and the ways you want to work it into your day.

Generator: A Story Guide

Visualize the world of the thing you are writing: its geographic center, its horizons. Then imagine a figure who could know about that world, perhaps far in the future of your story, perhaps by virtue of reports or surveillance, perhaps because of magic omniscience or prescience. Write a ballad for that figure to sing that gives a history of the world of your story. Set it wherever you want in time and space. Borrow the tune of an old ballad or a corrido and invent new words. Use the exercise to let the song tell you something you didn't know about your story.