

The Magical Writer

Session 1 — Creating Magical Writing Space

I get home from a meeting at 10pm, and have to be in bed by 1am. I have three hours to write.

As I enter my room, I am greeted by a stack of unpaid bills and unanswered letters on my desk. A scribbled To Do List lays across my keyboard. Next to my desk is a file cabinet stacked high with important papers and unfiled notes.

I check email, and immediately get sucked into elist drama concerning a protest I didn't attend, but have opinions about. I spend some time rewriting my response, and finally send it.

Then I take a quick look at Facebook and write a few comments so my friends know I care about them. And I may as well check sports scores while I'm online.

Finally, about 12:15am, I am ready for "my writing time." This takes place at the same desk, staring at the same piles of papers, which are constantly distracting me and reminding me of all the work I need to get done. I manage to eke out 45 minutes of writing, but it's uninspired, and doesn't look that different from the emails I wrote.

Maybe I need to try something different?

Creating and honoring our workspace is one of the main ways we can use everyday magic to support our creative process.

We can do this in both psychic and material ways. At the material level, I might ask, just as I would of ritual space: Is my workspace clean, uncluttered, and pleasing to my senses? Can I shift the lighting as desired? Do I have easy access to my work-tools?

Do I want books, feather-quills, empty teacups, half-sliced loaves of bread, and other writerly accoutrements around me, or do I want an open, uncluttered space?

Altars are part of a magical workspace. A writing altar reflects the dedicated space in our psyche. It serves as a reminder of the sacredness of our task and our tools. Pens, notebooks, digital recorders, and the like can be given places of honor instead of being tossed onto a cluttered desk.

Psychically, I can begin each work session by casting a circle, invoking the support of the elements, ancestors, deities, and other energies. If I spend five minutes getting grounded in my workspace, I'll reap the benefits in more focused writing.

I also find it useful to do "boundary-mirroring" before I work (see page 2). I find this doubly useful before checking email, to avoid getting sucked into other people's dramas and using my creative time and energy writing unnecessary responses.

See page 2 for exercises

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A Writing Intensive
in the Reclaiming Tradition

With George Franklin and Guest Teachers

Want to write a novel, memoir, or other narrative? Want to jump-start your writing, regardless of the style? Let Reclaiming magic help!

We'll look at the craft of writing and the emotional blocks that keep us from reaching our full artistic potential.

We'll meet in sacred space, share writing and support over the web, and gain understanding and skill from working with others. Writing can be an isolating practice - we'll use magic to weave a web of support and encouragement.

With magical tools such as circle-casting, ancestor invocations, trances, and spellwork, we'll free our expressive gifts and strengthen our belief in ourselves as artists.

We will also work on writing that expresses our unique voice, creating plot structures, developing characters, and

other aspects of the writers' craft. Each class includes directed writing time.

Class is suitable for those working on writing projects who want a supportive circle and new inspiration, and those looking to begin the process. Although you'll determine your own work pace, be prepared to dedicate time to your writing, and to write for at least ten minutes each day.

For more information, contact George, <george@directaction.org>

George Franklin is a Reclaiming teacher and co-editor of Reclaiming Quarterly. He has written several novels and published one (visit directaction.org), and helped edit work by writers such as Cynthia Lamb, T. Thorn Coyle, and Starhawk. Magic is a key part of his creative process.

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*Magical Writing Ancestor — Saint Matthew
from the Ebbo Gospels, c. 825 AD.*

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Exercises — Session 1

Creating Magical Writing Space

Create a more magical writing space. Think of it as a process, not a task to be completed.

Clear and redecorate the space. What do you really want/need around you to feel inspired and creative?

Visualize your ideal writing space. What can you do to bring that space one step closer to fruition?

Experiment with sound/music. Does different music evoke different writing or work pace?

What about lighting? When I was younger, I liked a single direct light on the page. Now I prefer brighter light in the room.

Create a writing altar, or dedicate space on your altar to your art.

Dedicating Our Tools

Collect your writing tools — keyboard, pens, journal, laptop, eraser, iPod...

Create a simple ceremony in which you dedicate each tool. Perhaps you invoke the power of the tool, or ask it to support you in your work.

Do the tools want a special home? Maybe the keyboard wants a sacred cloth that covers it between sessions. Maybe your favorite pen wants its own place on the desk. Maybe your laptop wants to be decorated.

As with any spellwork, be clear in your intent — ask the tools to support you and respect your boundaries, and not run rampant with your creative energy.

Mirror Work

Affirmations

Try looking in a mirror and saying: “Welcome writer!”

Try looking in a mirror and repeating this understatement (from co-counseling):

“It sometimes happens that someone writes a book.” Pause — What do you notice? What words pop into your head?

Repeat it several times, then stop and free-write.

Boundaries

Mirror-Boundaries – after grounding and casting a circle, I close my eyes and breathe in “unconditional respect and support for myself and my work.” I picture this coming from above and below. Then I take a hand mirror, face-out, and circle it three times around me (my head, chest, and gut), repeating this simple verselet (while keeping my main attention on what I am invoking, not what I am repelling):

For all other energy sent toward me /
May it harmlessly reflected be.

(I prefer this to an improvised statement because it affirms the point without requiring me to think about what I’m repelling – I can keep most of my attention on the “unconditional respect.”)

Mirror Etiquette

Kurt Vonnegut calls mirrors “leaks.”

Beware leaving a magical mirror lying face-up in your space. De-charge a mirror by drawing counter-clockwise circles around it, or dipping it into salt-water.

Writing Exercises

Cover Blurp

Who Am I? — write an introduction to yourself in glowing terms, citing past achievements and awards (real or fictional), favorite Italian recipes, etc.

Then hone it down to 100 words that will grace the back cover of your next book.

Why Write?

Introduce a fictional character — first or third person — who feels compelled to write.

What is the person like? What specifically do they feel called to write? How does the compulsion manifest? How do they (and others) deal with it?

Tarot Writing

You can do this exercise for yourself, or do a reading for one of your characters.

Draw three cards, face down — Past influences, Present situation, and Future challenge or call.

Read each card, then stop and free-write what it brings up. After you've read all three, reflect on any common threads.

Read cards as you will, or try this method:

- (1) Name three things or objects on the card. No stories, just name them.
- (2) Name one object or being on the card that is you.
- (3) Make up a one-sentence story about what is happening in the card.
- (4) Ask: What is this card telling me about my situation (past, present, future, etc).

Calliope — muse of epic poetry

Clio — muse of history

Erato — muse of love poetry

Euterpe — muse of music

Melpomene — muse of tragedy

Polyhymnia — muse of sacred poetry

Terpsichore — muse of dance

Thalia — muse of comedy

Urania — the muse of astronomy