

All Writing is Rewriting

**"Ultimately my hope is to amaze myself."
— Jerry Uelsmann**

Connectivity as generative

“... creativity occurs when things not usually connected are seen as connected” (think of examples from our workshopping this semester) “It is the unexpected juxtaposition that generates literature” (art).(199).

Try the opposite

“You will already have a sense of which method is your natural tendency, and I’d urge you, whichever it is, to work in the opposite direction”

“And don’t give up” (202).

Imaginative Research

But research for imaginative writing has a rather different nature and purpose than the research you've been taught. Whereas the "research paper" has as its first requirement a rigorous attention to both facts and sources, the watchword of imaginative research is *immersion*. Depending on the kind of piece you're writing, you may need accuracy, and you may need to credit or quote someone, but you certainly need the flavor, the imagery, and the atmosphere of whatever you seek to know. If you make yourself wholly available to whatever information you seek, what you need will be there when you come to write about it.

Revision

“To write your first draft, you banished the internal critic. Now make the critic welcome.

Writing gets better not just by polishing and refurbishing, not only by improving a word choice here and an image there, but by taking risks with the structure, re-envisioning, being open to new meaning itself” (204).

Revision

Think of “the film metaphor – long shot, middle shot, close-up – in order to think of ways of revisioning your work.

What is this piece about?” (205).

Reading aloud always helps (208).

Cut Up

This seems like a simple exercise, but it can actually be quite useful, particularly in terms of this digital context in which we are working.

Choose a story or poem that doesn't seem to be working, print a hard copy and cut it apart into the separate component parts of scenes and narrative passages. Lay these story pieces out on a large table and just take in what is in front of you. How many scenes or stanzas do you have? Are there too few or too many? Are there any "missing" scenes or stanzas? What would happen if you rearranged the sequence of events? What would happen if you begin with the beginning of the ending scene and use it to frame the story or poem?

Just Cut

In the process of revision, it's good to ask yourself the big question: what have I written? Think about what it is to you, what it means. Look for patterns in the work that you may not have even intended to produce, but exist anyway. What is crucial about this work? What is extraneous?

One way to figure out what is important in a work is to take a page of a story or a poem and cut it by 25%. What's crucial? What can be let go?

Editing for Endings

One way to figure out how and where a piece of writing ends is to write a word or line or a sentence about what the writing means. Use that encapsulated version to inform the editing process. Another thing about endings, people tend to write past them.

Editing for Endings

Look at your endings to see if you're trying to over-explain. If endings are explanatory, ask if that fits with the tone of the rest of the writing. Give your readers space, something to work with, or puzzle over, leave readers thinking, or end it so they are directed back into the story. Often the endings are already there, you just need to find them.

Editing for Endings

So, this week, take a piece you've written and try to come up with one or two words that encapsulate the idea of the piece. Edit with those words in mind.

label showing versus telling
label abstract and concrete

Homolinguistic Translation

Try this exercise from the poet Charles Bernstein:

Homolinguistic translation: Take a poem (someone else's, then your own) and translate it "English to English" by substituting word for word, phrase for phrase, line for line, or "free" translation as response to each phrase or sentence.

Homolinguistic Translation

Or translate the poem into another literary style or a different diction, for example into a slang or vernacular. Do several different types of homolinguistic translation of a single source poem.

Chaining: try this with a group, sending the poem on for "translation" from person to another until you get back to the first author.

transform some/thing into something else

Portfolios Due Next Week

Class reading, bring a few snacks.

It's such a perfect day. I'm glad I spent it with you.

Rewrite "Perfect Day" by Lou Reed:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9wXl4KK9ZY0)

[wXl4KK9ZY0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9wXl4KK9ZY0)

The feeling of being a writer, the feeling of revision

Opening warm-up + Alice Munro