

Beyond the Museum

Every piece of writing begins with the writer facing the unwritten page or nowadays, often, the blank computer screen. For many writers this is a disturbing moment; some find it almost disabling. Focusing on a specific object or picture or an animal, a landscape, a person can be a way of controlling the anxieties that accompany this confrontation with emptiness.

Outside the Museum there is a whole world of objects and images to write about.

Here are a few suggestions:

- family photos
- old furniture
- domestic objects stored in an attic or lumber room
- jewellery
- tools
- objects found while beachcombing
- natural objects: flowers, stones, shells, fossils, bones

You can adapt the exercises and techniques described in these web pages and use them to help provide a structure for the writing process.

You can, if you wish, write about the same object or picture more than once, using different exercises, and also different forms: fiction and poetry, sonnets and free verse. This can be a way of exploring the possibilities of writing and developing an insight into your own strengths and weaknesses.

But of course, you don't have to tackle any of the exercises if you don't want to, or write about objects or pictures at all. You will find that the techniques and advice suggested in these pages can be applied to writing of many different kinds, on any subject that appeals to you.

Setting aside time to write

The writing process usually takes a lot of time. Finding that time isn't always easy. Many people find it helpful to keep up a regular routine. Consider setting aside a specific time for writing every day or write for several hours at the same point every week.



Front of the V&A from the west side showing the central tower and west dome

Treat your writing sessions as sacrosanct. Do not let yourself be distracted. Make sure you spend the time writing, not on incidental activities such as choosing a pen-name, or designing a new word processor template.

You may find that whole sessions go by in which you write very little, or even nothing at all. At other times you may feel that you are producing nonsense, or shuffling words about in a pointless way. Stick at it. In the end the breakthrough will happen, the right words will come, the pages will be written.