

*This writing exercise is one of several offered in a workshop presented through
Cabrillo College Extension. To learn more about these classes,
obtain additional writing exercises, or to register online:*

www.laurenmarinavarro.com

Memoir Writing:
Using the Journal to Explore Memories and Meaning

The Right to Write

Inside my head is a box of stars I've never dared to open.

—*Lyric from a song by Sting*

There is a vitality, a life force, an energy...that is translated through you into action. And because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique. If you block it, it will never exist...It is not your business to determine how good it is...It is your business to keep it yours clearly and directly, to keep the channel open.

—*Martha Graham*

Read the book of your life which has
Been given you. A voice comes to your Soul saying,
***Lift your foot; cross over; move into the emptiness
Of question and answer and question.***

—*Rumi, translated by Coleman Barks*

There is a world inside each of us that we know better than anything else, and a world outside of us that calls for attention. Our subject matter is always right with us.

—*Ellen Bass*

Writing Exercise:

After reflecting on the quotes offered above, select *one* of the writing prompts below:

1. My initial reaction to reading this quote was...(awe, sadness, surprise, etc.) I felt this way because...
2. The story I am most interested "listening" to from the Story Teller exercise is.... This story is particularly meaningful to me because...
3. What are the three most significant events in my life? The one I remember the best is.....because.....
4. Every time I write, I let the stars out. What do Sting's lyrics evoke in me? What box of stars have I not yet opened?

The Right to Write--continued

Additional quotes on this theme:

The most regretful people on earth are those who felt the call to creative work, who felt their own creative power restive and uprising, and gave to it neither power or time.

—*Mary Oliver, "Blue Pastures"*

What another would have done as well, do not do it. What another would have said as well or written as well do not say or write it. Be faithful to that which exists nowhere but in yourself.

—*Andre Gide*

It is well to understand as early as possible in one's writing life that there is just one contribution which every one of us can make; we can give into the common pool of experience some comprehension of the world as it looks to each of us.

—*Dorothea Brande*

I love it when I write well, but I love it when I write, period.

--*Julia Cameron, The Right to Write*

Last night as I was sleeping, I dreamt—marvelous error!—that a spring was breaking out in my heart. I said: Along which secret aqueduct, Oh water, are you coming to me, water of a new life that I have never drunk?

—*Antonio Machado, translated by Robert Bly*