

HOW TO START AND CONTINUE WRITING



Dennis Etzel Jr



E-newsletter
tinyletter.com/poemslyrical

ABOUT ME



ROAD THROUGH
POETRY

JOURNALING

COMMUNITY

ACADEMICS

ROAD THROUGH
POETRY

IMITATION

INSPIRATION

PROMPT

PROJECT

?????

ROAD THROUGH
POETRY

IMITATION

INSPIRATION

PROMPT

PROJECT

RITUAL

**NAROPA SWP
2023**





POETIC UTOPIA

COMMUNITY

AUTONOMY / AGENCY

SUPPORT

BOUNDARIES

POETIC UTOPIA

COMMUNITY

All poets see, hear, and love each other. New poets encouraged to enter the poetic utopia.

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All poets are empowered to write and share through community.

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To find one or two other poets to share for feedback before bringing poems out.

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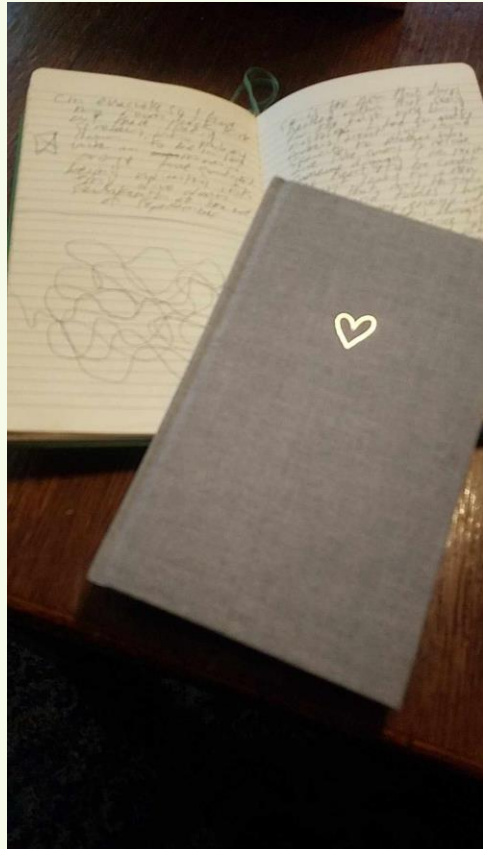
AUTONOMY / AGENCY

All poets are empowered to write and share through community.

BOUNDARIES

Do not waste time and energy on anyone who does not support your autonomy or community-making.

**KEEPING A
(FANCY)
NOTEBOOK**



NAME / CONTACT

IDEAS ABOUT POETRY

INTRUSIONS

IDEAS FOR PROJECTS

KEEPING A (FANCY) NOTEBOOK



NAME / CONTACT

Some people write a reward for return

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IDEAS ABOUT POETRY

From discussions and collected quotes

INTRUSIONS

IDEAS FOR PROJECTS

**IDEAS ABOUT
POETRY**

“Poetry is an example of vulnerability as a strength”

--Dennis Etzel Jr.

“This is poetry as illumination, for it is through poetry that we give name to those ideas which are — until the poem — nameless and formless, about to be birthed, but already felt.”

--from “Poetry is Not a Luxury” by
Audre Lorde

“Every poem is a descendent of God.”

--Li-Young Lee

KEEPING A (FANCY) NOTEBOOK



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From discussions and collected quotes

INTRUSIONS

From discussions and observations (this does **not** include having time to write)

IDEAS FOR PROJECTS

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IDEAS ABOUT POETRY

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IDEAS FOR PROJECTS

Often come from a combination of two or three things (e.g. childhood, movies, survival)

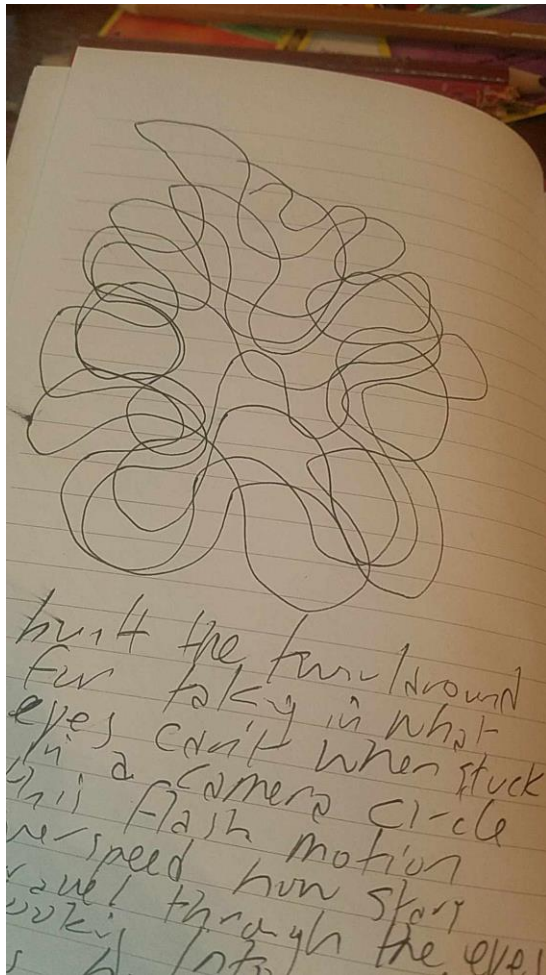
DEVELOPING A RITUAL

PEOPLE STOP WRITING OFTEN
BECAUSE OF BAD JOBS

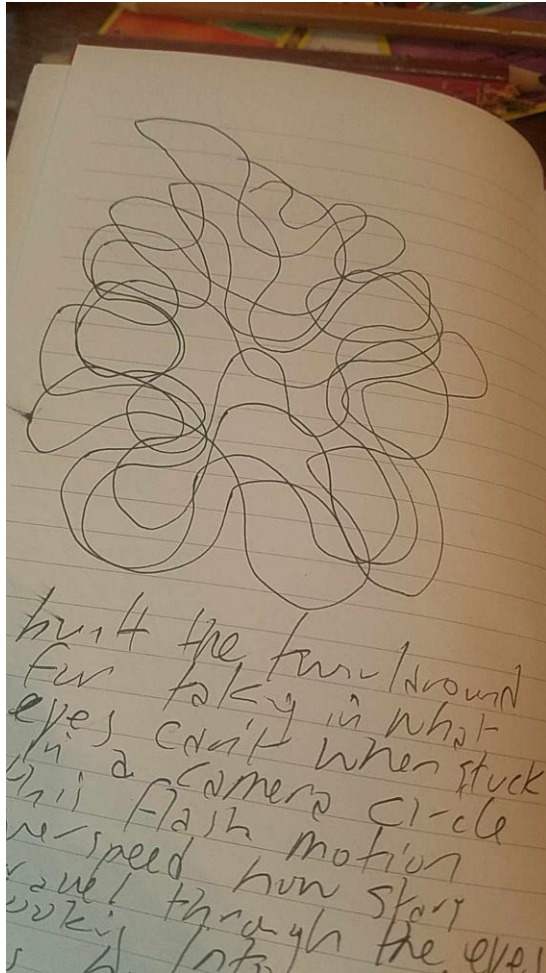
YOU CAN WRITE ANYWHERE FOR 15
MINUTES A DAY AS PART OF THE DAY

EMPHASIS ON WORDS—NOT POEM

Bad job ritual



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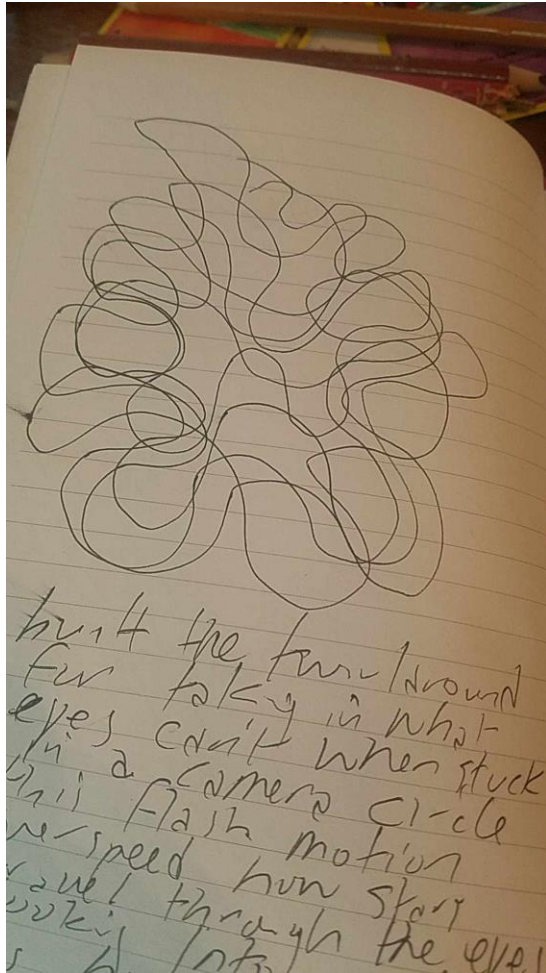
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Leslie's prairie ritual

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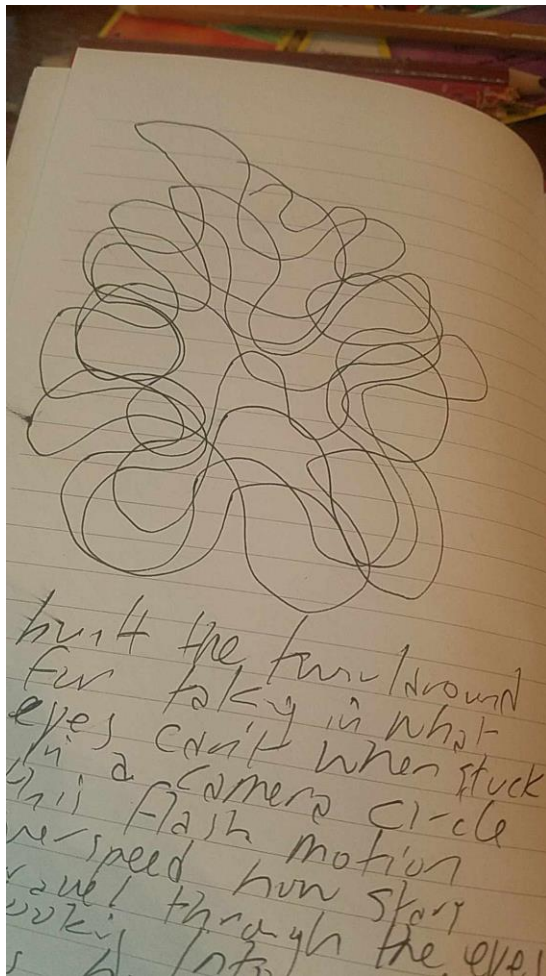
Leslie's prairie ritual

Farai's food and fall ritual

HAPTIC RITUAL

(based on Stephen Vincent)

Look in the mirror, rose quartz in receptive hand



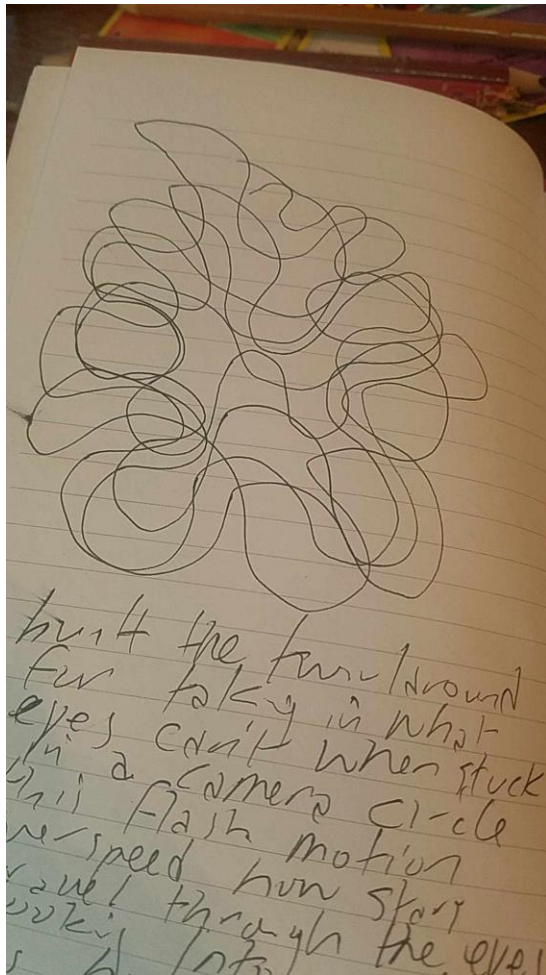
Eye

HAPTIC RITUAL

(based on Stephen Vincent)

Look in the mirror, rose quartz in receptive hand

Make a drawing like a seismograph



Eye

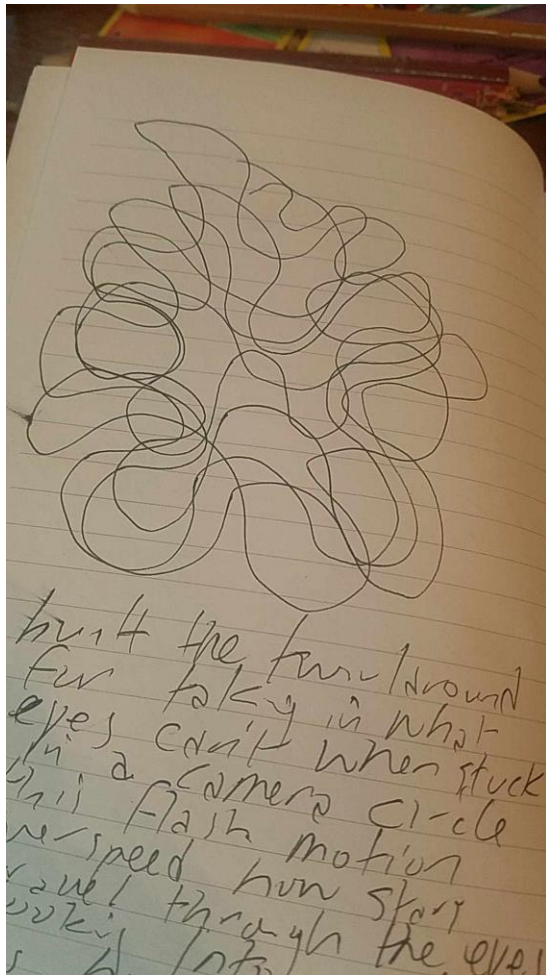
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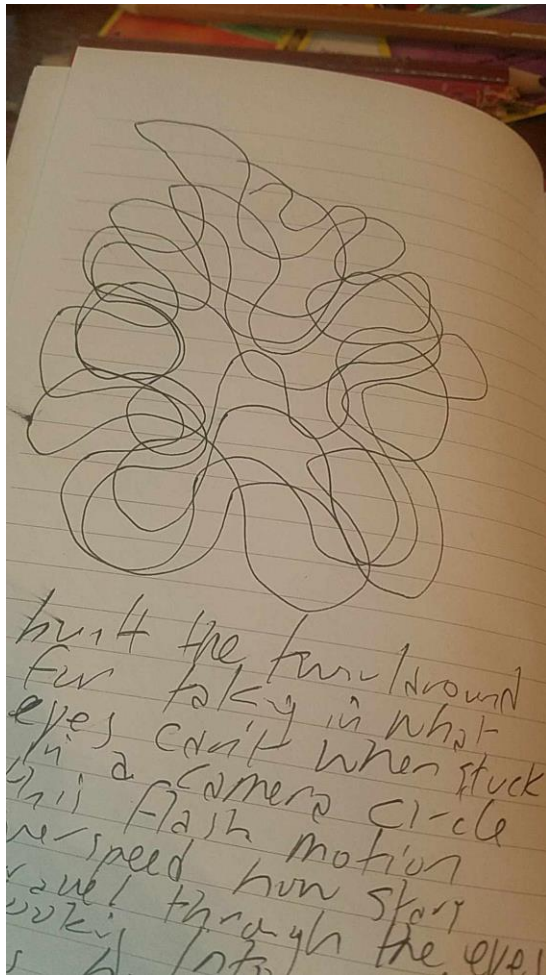
Make a drawing like a seismograph

Switch rose quartz to dominant hand



Eye

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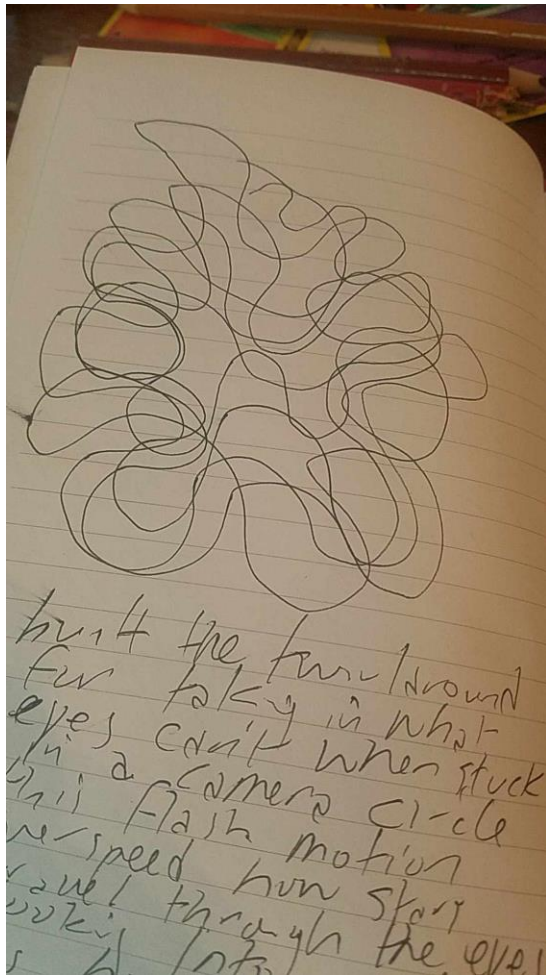
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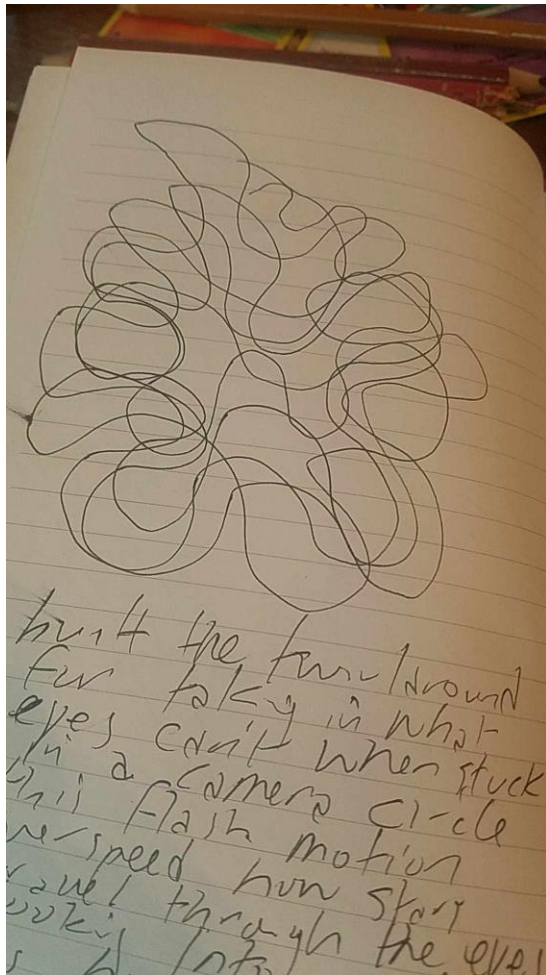
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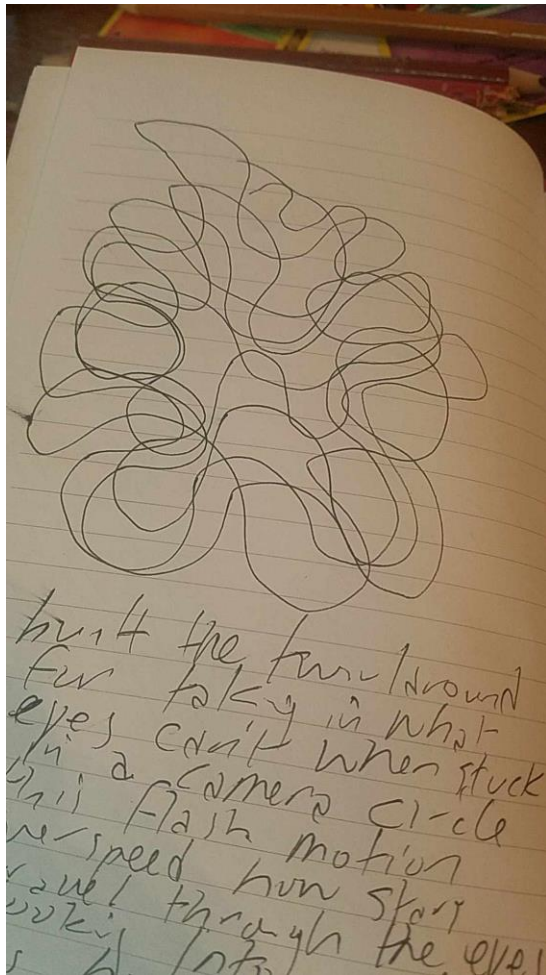
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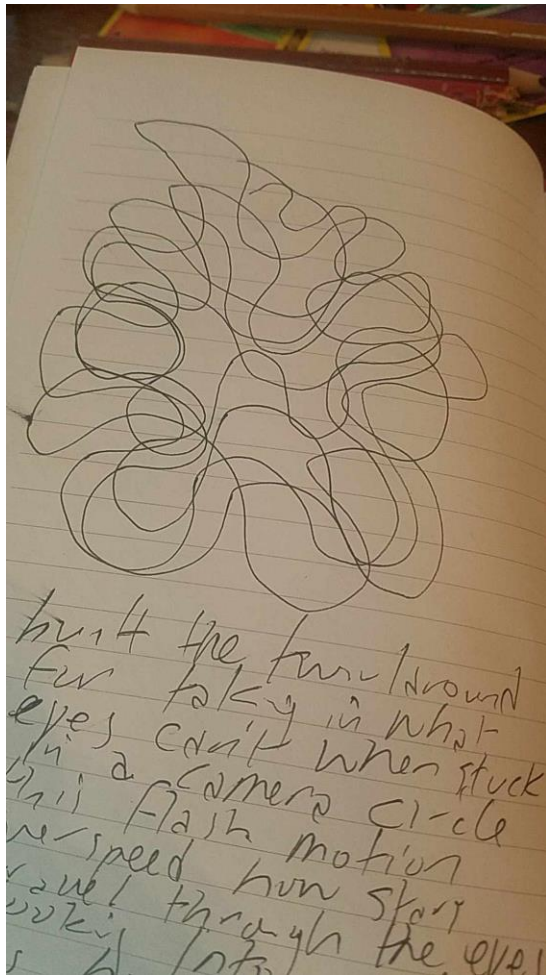
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Write as fast as you can

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RESULTS

An Autumn Feast

I guessed Autumn would play
hide-and-seek with its show-
and-tell over morning, temperatures
shift as monarchs roam, alongside

caterpillars climbing milkweed,
their luncheon, their brief feast
of our front yard. Yes, these holidays
turn each day, as another evening

of Shakespeare on stage, ritual acts
by hummingbirds give their own
performances. Inside cool breezes,
luxuries, bon voyages bestowed,

as I am that lion of farewells, royalty
saying goodbye to August's crowning.

By Dennis Etzel Jr.
Topeka, KS

**I guessed Autumn would hide and seek with it show and
tell no spreads over morning when the temperature was
so awful that summer even fled I look over any hint of monarchs
from the south yes I love those days as Shakespeare is on stage
that hummingbirds as winged things give their own
performance**

When you left you meant away your left in the way that
words make circles and leave spin tornadoes this must be
Kansas as Juniper takes this right away approach to
climbing milkweed makes its own Jack Beanstalk stories
while I am perched on the porch waiting for **Monarch**
butterflies to **roam their** ways through our **Feast of the front
yard** and their Journey forth I am moving into September
with the **luxuries Cool Breeze bestow I am the royalty of a
lion said goodbye to my crowning** season only best wishes
throughout a month like **everyday holds a holiday**

UNIVERSAL DECK RITUAL

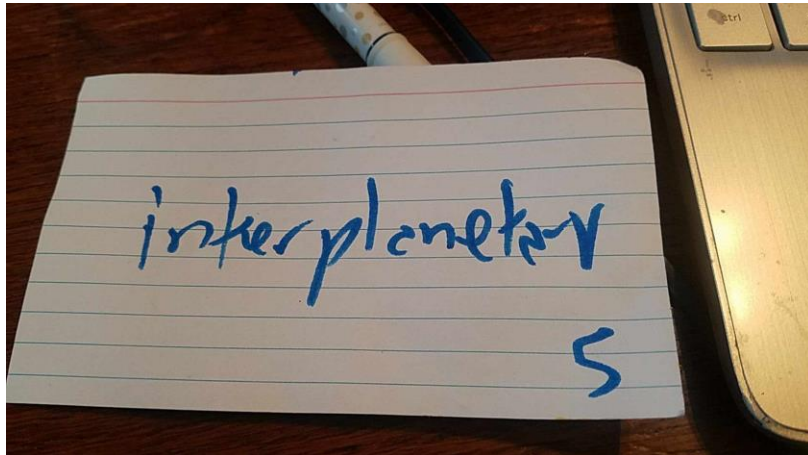
TWO TO FOUR PEOPLE – FORM
GROUPS NOW

FIVE INDEX CARDS PER PERSON

I WILL TAKE YOU THROUGH THE
STEPS:

Number each card as you write on
one side

If possible, use a marker



UNIVERSAL DECK
RITUAL



On the other
side of each
card, draw an
artistic
representation
for each word

UNIVERSAL DECK RITUAL



Make space

One person lays a card down ART
SIDE UP

Someone else takes a turn placing
a card down that is **similar to or
relates to the one that is on the
table (intuitive play)**

Take turns laying cards down



UNIVERSAL DECK RITUAL



Make space

One person lays a card down ART
SIDE UP

Someone else takes a turn placing
a card down that is **similar to the
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Take turns laying cards down

UNIVERSAL DECK
RITUAL

Feel free to add branches



UNIVERSAL DECK RITUAL

Write “Universal Deck” and today’s date in your journal

Take notes of what you see as connections

Take notes like an anthropologist in the field

Do not worry about the poem!

There is no “right way” for doing this

Try to write for half a page or more

UNIVERSAL DECK RITUAL

Flip the cards while keeping the same order /
chain

Take more notes of what you see as word
connections

Add your own words, too!

Do not worry about the poem!

There is no “right way” for doing this

Try to write for half a page or more

phosphorus

luminous

harvest

trace

breeze

pumpkin

flamboyant

growth

film

relief

UNIVERSAL DECK RITUAL

Flip the cards while keeping the same order /
chain

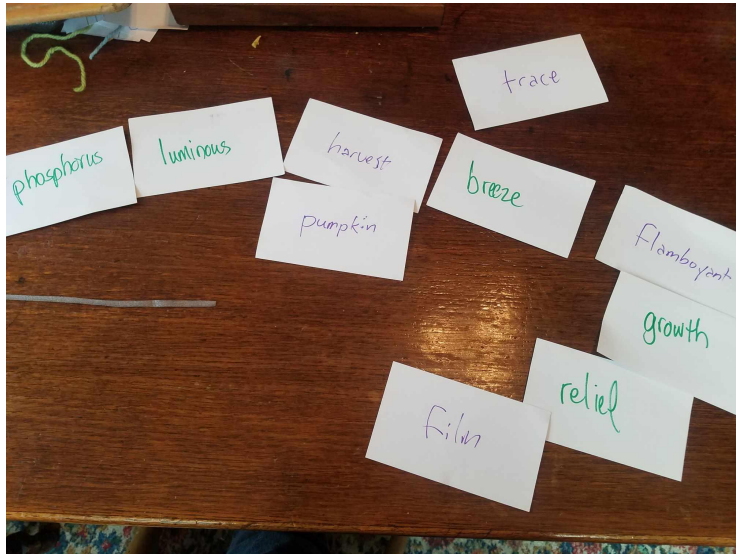
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**WHAT ELSE TO
DO WITH THE
WORDS FROM A
RITUAL**

- Put feet flat on the floor for typing
- Take turns between writing as fast as you can for five minutes and copying the notes over

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WHAT ELSE TO
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- Put feet flat on the floor for typing
- Take turns between writing as fast as you can for five minutes and copying the notes over
- Print two copies, one to hide for a month and one to highlight what you like in the writing
- Bring together those fragments to write a poem / Revisit the other copy in a month, even reading backwards

WHAT TO DO WITH THE WORDS FROM A RITUAL

from A Fire-Sun-Leo Ritual to Bring Myself Home 15

I circle at summer
this house that I thought I dwelled in carried another dwelling I absorbed
to keep my safe my body could take any blows as it couldn't be a temple
with those possible outcomes I couldn't make in my choose adventure
way of only two or three choices while each constellation had so many
I referred to stars to tether to I was born in a *August just the year* July of promises of beaches while stuck
in Kansas Promises of fun Under the Sun that beat down its problems
that echoed mine here is the house here is the beating I was born out of
head circle house yelling doctors with nurses shouting at That shouting that fills the mind
that turns to its own that listens for the shouting coming from a chorus
that is divided into abusive soloists my mother to give birth already I
was born in a *August* July of possibilities while only given promises I was in a
July that wish to return replaced by an emperor posing as a leader when
I seek no it is no empire that I seek but to be a leader of whatever to follow like a
dance around trees still firm like a maypole taking note *of June* while
July offers august a remedy of forests full lushness I am hinged while I
want to circle

RITUALS HELP!

- If I don't shape a poem any day for a month, I am still writing
- I use voice-to-text to transfer words over to a Google Doc
- I copy words over to an MS Word file to shape a poem
- Mental health boost / self-care

QUESTIONS AND
PERSONAL
RITUALS

What questions do you have?

Would you like a personal ritual
to help in writing?

THANK YOU!

Dennis Etzel Jr

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dennisetzeljr.com

