

WHERE WE WORK



Dennis Etzel Jr



E-newsletter
tinyletter.com/poemslyrical

**WHERE WE
WORK**

This workshop:

- Discussion on ritual writing
- Use prompts to reflect on work, including unpaid labor
- Discussion of Fast-Food Sonnets
- Generate ideas for your own book of poetry (or any form of writing)
- Read my poems as starting points
- Develop a universal deck way to write
- Finish with a discussion on a personal ritual for writing

INTRODUCTIONS

Name

Where are you from?

What kind of writing do you do or are interested in?

What do you like about the conference?

ABOUT ME



ROAD THROUGH
WRITING

JOURNALING poetry

COMMUNITY poetry

ACADEMICS –
poetry, fiction, non-
fiction, hybrid forms

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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SUPPORT

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

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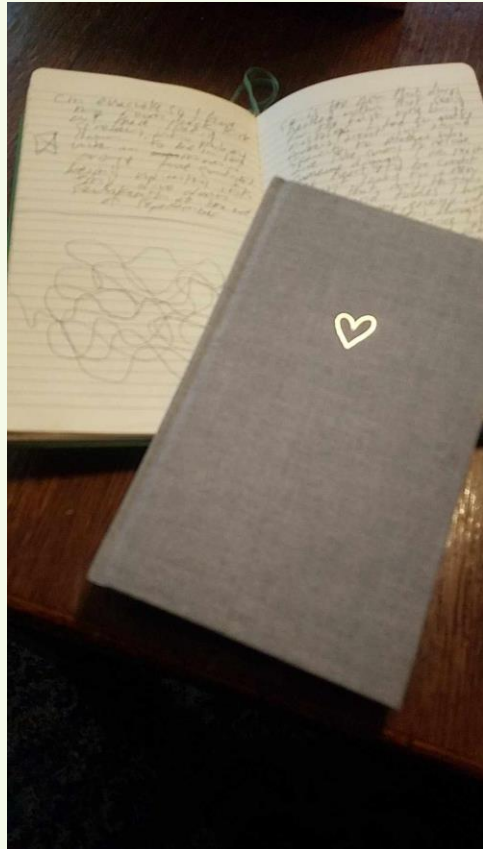
AUTONOMY / AGENCY

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**



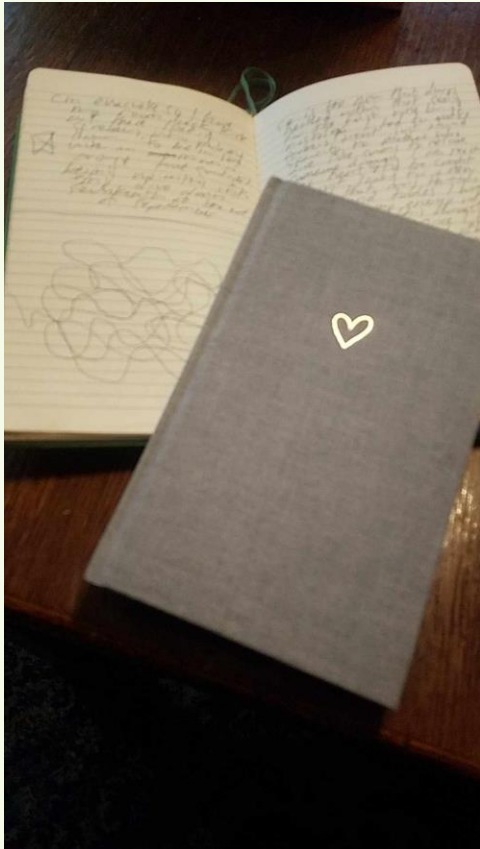
NAME / CONTACT

**IDEAS ABOUT POETRY,
FICTION, ETC.**

INTRUSIONS

IDEAS FOR PROJECTS

KEEPING A (FANCY) NOTEBOOK



NAME / CONTACT

Some people write a reward for return

IDEAS ABOUT POETRY,
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IDEAS ABOUT POETRY, FICTION, ETC.

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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IDEAS ABOUT POETRY, FICTION, ETC.

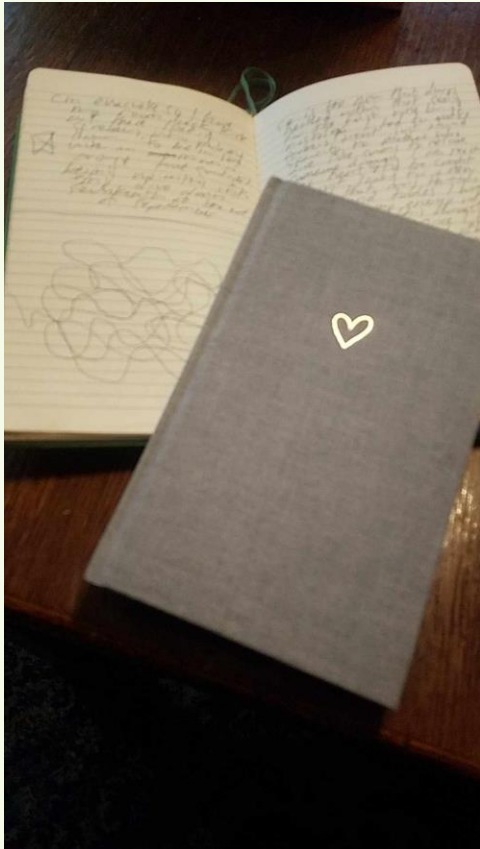
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INTRUSIONS

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

IDEAS FOR PROJECTS

KEEPING A (FANCY) NOTEBOOK



NAME / CONTACT

Some people write a reward for return

IDEAS ABOUT POETRY

From discussions and collected quotes

INTRUSIONS

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

IDEAS ABOUT POETRY, FICTION, ETC.

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

**REFLECTION ON
WORK**

Label “WORK” as the start of your list
(also date)

What jobs have you had and currently
do?

**REFLECTION ON
WORK**

Label “WORK” as the start of your list
(also date)

What jobs have you had and currently
do?

What are favorite memories from any
of these jobs?

**REFLECTION ON
WORK**

Label “WORK” as the start of your list
(also date)

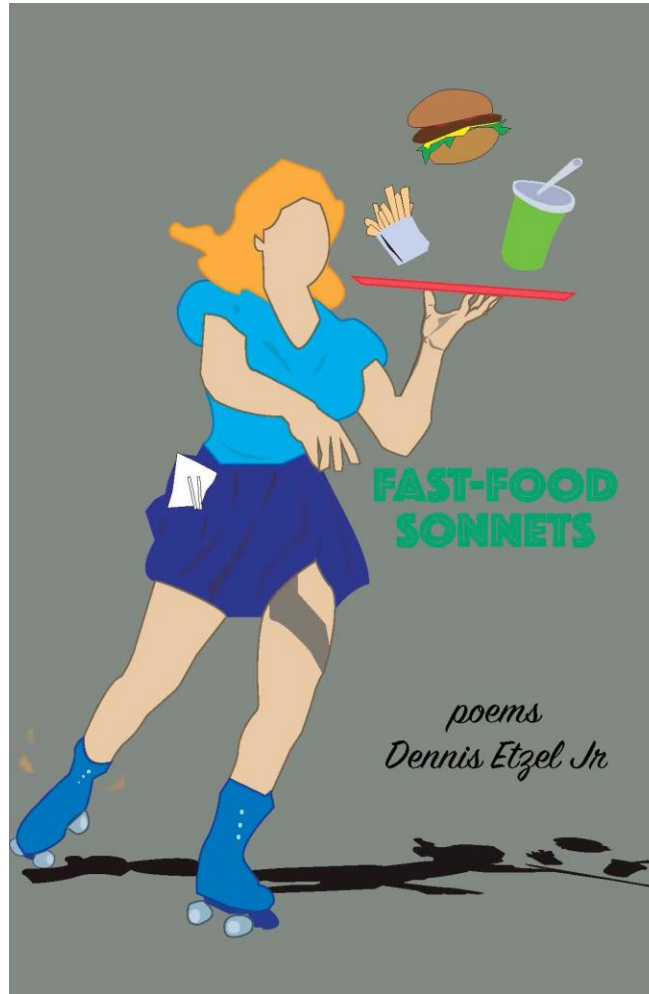
What jobs have you had and currently
do?

What are favorite memories from any
of these jobs from your list?

What are unhappy aspects about any
of these jobs from your list?

MY FIRST JOB

My first job was at McDonald's, a source of trauma.



MY PROCESS

Slow—took from 2003 to 2016 to complete.

Trauma-informed—anchor joy in the process of remembering.

ACEs Adverse Childhood Experiences

- 61% of adults had at least one ACE and 16% had 4 or more types of ACEs.**
- Females and several racial/ethnic minority groups were at greater risk for experiencing 4 or more ACEs.**
- Many people do not realize that exposure to ACEs is associated with increased risk for health problems across the lifespan.**

MY PROCESS



MY PROCESS

Support in place.

I felt better after writing.

When half-way completed, I took inventory on what I could write about.

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Brainstorm the titles for your collection of poetry or stories.

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UNIVERSAL DECK RITUAL

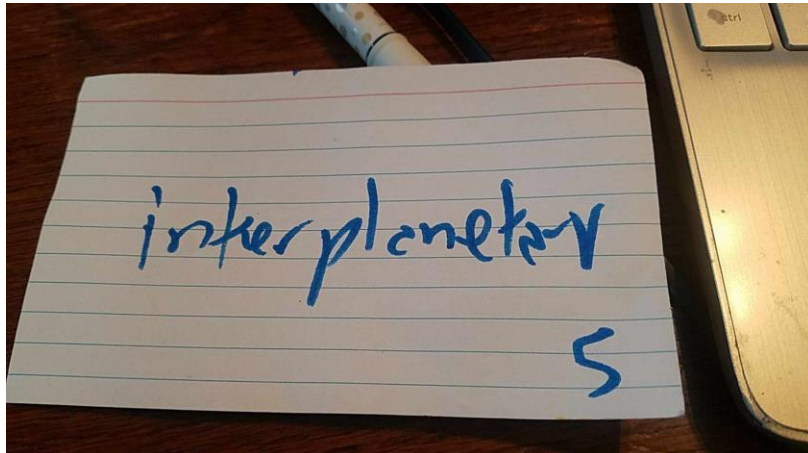
TWO TO FOUR PEOPLE – FORM
GROUPS NOW

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
one that is on the table**

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

relief

film

UNIVERSAL DECK RITUAL

Flip the cards while keeping the same order /
chain

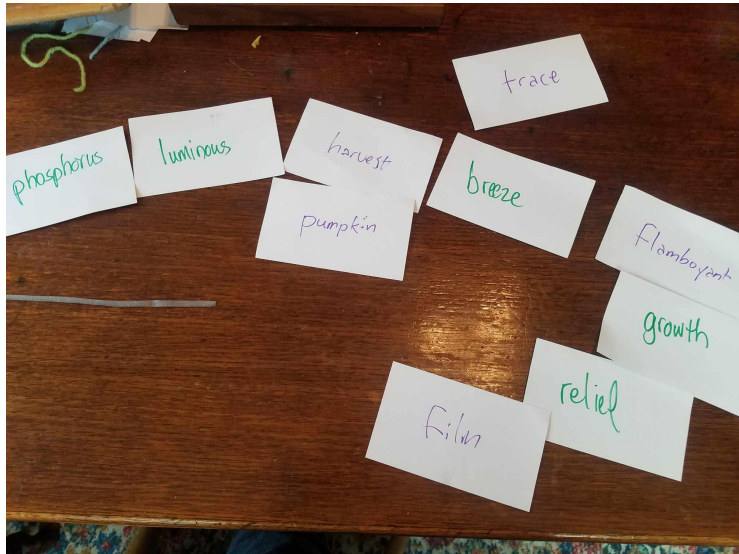
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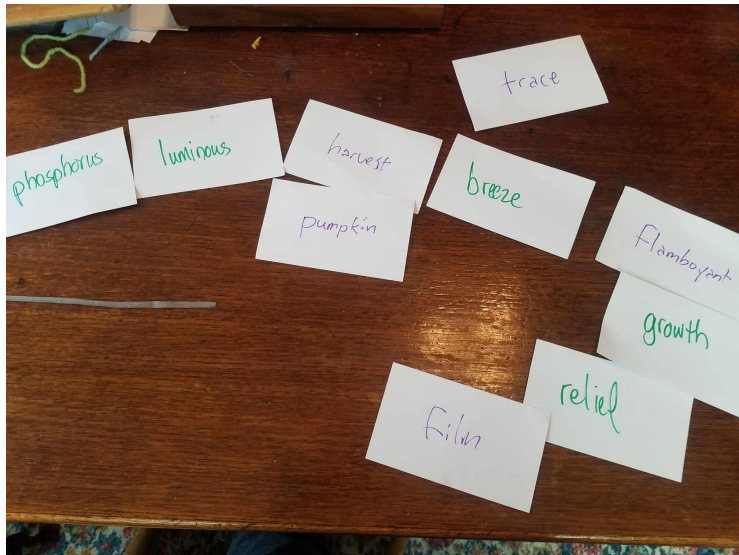
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UNIVERSAL DECK RITUAL

Sharing words



**START WRITING
A POEM**

Based on your lists, the words you generated, or both

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

