

Does it really matter if you write (or paint, or dance) everyday?

Yes. Yes it does.

The reason we don't write daily is because we want it to be perfect— or at least beautiful and brimming with potential.

We believe it matters.

We believe it's up to us.

We believe that to count it must be epic, a hands-down blockbuster.

We don't think it can be as simple as [one poem a day](#).

We don't think it can take three minutes or less.

I need time to think! I can't do anything in only three minutes!

You can, as a matter of fact.

In "[The Getaway Car](#)," Ann Patchett talks about her journey as a writer.

She says that if you really want to write/[*insert smoldering passion*], you set aside 30 minutes, and you either do it, or you just sit there.

Nothing else. Day after day.

She says eventually you'll find out if you really want to write.

You'll discover which is more unbearable: writing, or not writing.

If you really want to write, you'll pick up the pen and do it.

All it takes is the commitment to doing nothing else.

I read this and was inspired.

My Inner Critic, however, was caustically cynical:

You can't just sit there— You need to be productive! You have things to do— and if you're going to write, then it had better be a best seller. It had better be going somewhere. You can't justify just sitting there!

Can't I?

I write a poem a day, sometimes more.

Because I'm inspired?

Sometimes that happens.

I write a poem a day because I simply cannot justify to myself that I don't have time for it. Because such an excuse smacks of ego, fear, self-sabotage.

Because I am ok with writing an imperfect poem.

Poems are frivolous.

Poems are like paper plates.

It's not a crime or a sin to throw some away.
That's what they're meant for. (And they definitely biodegrade).

This is not a slam. This is healthy heartlessness.

This is your access.
Through daily practice, you experience the healthy heartlessness required to make art.
Poems appear whether you light incense for them or not.

The bonus?

Sometimes these daily poems are beautiful.
When they rush out of me like the exhalation of used breath, I am grateful.
But even when they drag, come out breech, sound trite, I can check "write a poem" off
my list for the day.
Even if I write nothing else, eat Cheetos for lunch, am crabby at my family, I met *one*
minimum. I showed up.

Natalie Goldberg says that the only thing that keeps her writing is knowing that she'll
show up everyday.
Because she shows up everyday, she trusts herself.

Living in that state of trust is the most beautiful experience I know.

HOMEWORK

Write a poem right now.

Yes, now. On the back of an envelope, in a text message, with a crayon. Write without
crossing out words, without stopping to hem and haw or say it right.
You'll write another one tomorrow, and the next day— it doesn't have to be "good."

Notice how you feel.

You might feel good or great, inspired to write another. You might feel the sludge
shifting loose from your arteries.

Give yourself what you need.

Do you need one notebook? Some scratch paper? The accountability of NaPoWriMo?
What time will work the best? Your Ego will push it off. I suggest doing it as soon as
possible in the morning.

Now do it tomorrow.
Then do it again.
See what happens.
Let them sit. Don't judge anything yet.

Experience for yourself a life of heartless trust.