

## **Directed Free-Writing** **Lioi/21W.735**

Free-writing is tool for breaking writer's block and overcoming the internal critic/editor who stops you from composing by criticizing what is being written as it is being written. Pure free-writing consists of writing in a stream-of-consciousness mode without concern for subject, audience, or organization. Directed free-writing, the kind I will ask you to do most often, asks you to respond in stream-of-consciousness to a quotation or some other source. This kind of writing can easily become the seed of an essay, though we do not worry about its status as potential seed during the process of composition. Free writing is usually timed to provide a predetermined end-point for a potentially endless process.

Example:

“My father, as he lay dying at home of bowel cancer, used to enjoy watching Tarzan reruns on the children's hour of television. Like a strong green vine, they swung him far away from his deathbed to a world of skinny-dipping and friendly animals and scenic beauty linked to the lost realities of his adolescence in Kansas City.”

--from Edward Hoagland, “Heaven and Nature”

My free-writing (5 minutes):

If I were dying I wouldn't watch Tarzan reruns. The problem isn't the reruns, it's the Tarzan. The tv jungle might be okay for a Kansas City adolescence, but I'm not from that part of Jersey. I should probably watch reruns of “Green Acres” to remind myself of all the city people who moved to the suburbs and didn't know what to do with their lawns. My father included. Being from Newark didn't give him a lot of experience with tractor-mowers. It's a miracle that mimosa tree survived being run over so many times. Maybe that's why those drunken neighbors ran into that brick mailbox he made from scratch. It was always a little lopsided. Maybe they watched from their windows as he mowed down that sapling over and over again and wanted to deliver some vengeance on the rest of the yard. That time-capsule I put inside the mailbox as he cemented over the last hole exploded like everything else on impact. I remember sealing the mason jar with wax to keep out the moisture so my little account of our lives would survive the ages. I explained why we had named a boy-cat Isis and why we had bean-bag chairs in the living room and how our Labrador retriever was always running into doors.