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WRITING EXTREME PERFORMANCE POEMS

Befriend energized, emotional, extreme words! Create a list of action verbs that can be done physically, like: drink, smell, lick, slap, kick, swim, run, sleep, etc. Review your list and think of more exact or exaggerated versions of each verb, for instance, for the word “talk”, use “scream”, for “jump” use “leap”.

Now create a list of words that can be used as adjectives. Try to use words that can be physically felt (I tend to like uncomfortable feelings), like: sticky, scorching, itchy, aching, jagged, slick, ripped, bitter, etc. You can do this for nouns and adverbs. Just try to focus on something you can physically feel.

Find a place to write. It might be right where you are. It could be in your bedroom, looking out the window, on the subway, under a tree. Focus on an object or an action taking place, for example: the way the sunlight or wind is affecting a tree, or how a child lies asleep in the lap of her parent, or rain runs down a window.

Write! Start with a feeling. Perhaps it's how you felt when someone deeply hurt your feelings (You saw your new love kissing someone else). You might be missing someone you were very fond of (your grandmother, who just passed away). Something unfair might have happened to you or, someone you're close to. Or, remember how you felt when something incredibly good happened to you (You just won an award).

Recalling the details that made you feel that way, start describing your object/action in detail, using action verbs, physical adjectives, nouns, and adverbs. Let your emotions fly and guide your description, not worrying about being accurate. Feel free to let go of logic and switch out verbs (instead of “The sky looked blue”, try “The sky ripped blue”, or “The sky burned blue”). Write until you are empty! Don't worry about the words now. You can revise later using more of your new friends, extreme words!