

Writing Manifesto

“How to Be an Explorer of the World”

By Keri Smith

What’s the difference between a writing manifesto and a set of writing rules? It is difficult to draw a line, I admit. I could say that a writing manifesto can be applied to other areas of life, but clearly that would involve truncating my list, and I’m not going to do that. I will therefore wriggle out of this question by vaguely claiming that writing rules are (or ought to be) *practical* in nature, while the manifesto’s purpose is to *incite, ignite and inspire*.

I think for this reason that they should be written in Smith’s style – in a rush of inspiration, perhaps on the back of a napkin using a free leaky biro, in wonky handwriting & long after midnight when a little intoxicated by life, sleep deprivation and caffeine. And like Kerouac – wildly abbreviated, capitalised, random & ungrammatically jolting one out of linguistic ruts.

HOW TO BE AN EXPLORER
OF THE WORLD.

↳ List
↳ Interpretations
(Qualifications)

1. ALWAYS BE LOOKING.
(NOTICE THE GROUND BENEATH YOUR FEET.)
2. CONSIDER EVERYTHING ALIVE & ANIMATE.
3. (EVERY THING) IS INTERESTING. LOOK CLOSER.
4. ALTER YOUR COURSE OFTEN.
5. OBSERVE FOR LONG DURATIONS (AND SHORT ONES.)
6. NOTICE THE STORIES GOING ON AROUND YOU.
7. NOTICE (PATTERNS), MAKE (CONNECTIONS).
8. (DOCUMENT) YOUR FINDINGS (FIELD NOTES) IN A VARIETY OF WAYS.
9. INCORPORATE INDETERMINANCY.
10. OBSERVE MOVEMENT.
11. CREATE A PERSONAL DIALOGUE WITH YOUR ENVIRONMENT. TALK TO IT.
12. TRACE THINGS BACK TO THEIR (ORIGINS).
13. USE (ALL) OF THE SENSES. IN YOUR INVESTIGATIONS.

Text 2 - Novel Extract

From *After January* by Nick Earls

On the eighteenth we go to Bribie. We take the surf skis from under the house and load them in your car and set off from Golden Beach, over the drifting sandbars and the oystered outcrops of rock and the deep dark band of the water of the passage. We pull the skis up onto a narrow beach and walk until we find a path.

I remember walking here years ago, having paddled here the first time on the ski, setting out by myself from the other side of the water. Taking several summers and then weeks to decide I might get to Bribie and back, weeks to find enough confidence. And when I landed it was as though I had reached another country, one that had not been visited for a long time. And I found something in the mud, sticking out of the mud like an old Roman sword, and I walked through the mud to get to it, not taking my eyes off it in case it would disappear, in case I wasn't seeing it at all. I imagined taking hold of this old blunt blade and drawing the sword from the mud and carrying it back on the ski, taking care of it across the deep engulfing waters of the passage and the sand-bottomed shallows. Walking from the water, the sword in my hand, telling my mother I think the Romans were there, on Bribie.

And it didn't disappear and I took it in both hands and the mud gave it to me with a shlock and closed over the hole with ooze and the hilt of the sword was the skull of a pelican, the blade I held its beak. I washed it with care at the edge of the water and took it home anyway, all the time wishing it was something else.

I found a pelican's skull just near here once, I tell you. Sticking up out of the mud.

We follow the track among trees and I wonder if it was cut in 1943. Or if the tracks from the war are long gone and grown over, and people walk new tracks between new trees, and the tracks move like the sandbars in the passage, following lines of least resistance. Closing over with growth, opening up with death again, a bush dying, a tree dying and drying and falling in the harsh salt sand. I can hear the sea ahead of us.

The path leads us to a concrete slab, and the sand comes over one corner of it in a slow wave. And there are holes like square-cut wounds where metal posts have rusted away, orange stains around the edges, the last of the metal crusting in some of them like scabs. There is glass across the concrete, the smashed glass of stubbies thrown hard against it, brown beer glass scattered across the slab. We stop and look at this, as though something might happen.

["It's the fort, isn't it?" you say. "Part of the fort."]

Probably.

And the sea sounds close, as though the next rise is the only thing that stops it from sweeping over this outpost. We keep walking and the track takes us through thinning trees and scrub and onto dunes. There is a concrete building at the end of the track, at the edge of the beach. Its doors and windows are just spaces and the warm wind skates off the sea and runs through these spaces like the low noise of breathing, like a long breath out.

To the south the beach goes as far as we can see. Some distance to the north the island ends and across the water is Caloundra, Bulcock Beach, Kings Beach, the headland, covered with red-roofed houses and brick blocks of holiday units.

Text three – Poem

The Door

Go and open the door.
Maybe outside there's
a tree, or a wood,
a garden,
or a magic city.

Repetition

Go and open the door.
Maybe a dog's rummaging.
Maybe you'll see a face,
or an eye,
or the picture
of a picture.

Cumulative listing

Go and open the door.
If there's a fog,
it will clear.

contrast

Go and open the door.
Even if there's only
the darkness ticking,
even if there's only
the hollow wind,
even if
nothing
is there,
go and open the door.

At least
there'll be
a draught.

By Miroslav Holub

Anaphora

SAMPLE ANSWERS

Question 1 (4 marks)

Answers could include:

- The act of writing is a reflective medium through which writers can explore and discover new transformative realisations about the self and the world. (1)
- Writing allows a direct insight into the thought processes and beliefs of a writer and their new experiencing of the transformative effects of writing in discovering attitudes towards life. (1)
- The succinct number list of high modality directives about how to be an explorer reveals the importance of reflecting on one's writing to uncover a more complete, valuable understanding of the importance of participating in transformative new experiences. (1)
- Through the opening rhetorical question "What's the difference between a writing manifesto and a set of writing rules?", the author implies that they have investigated a new experience, and that it has transformed their worldview through a later to be disclosed answer. (1)

Question 2 (5 marks)

Answers could include:

- Embarking on a new experience with expectations always results in discovering the unexpected. This is highlighted through the writer's hope to reveal a sword from the mud and then they realise that their expectations are subverted when "the hilt of the sword was the skull of the pelican". (1)
- Over time, the pelican skull's value is reassessed and has become a memento through the nature of introspection, in contrast to the writer's initial hope for it to be something different. It is signified through the shift from past to present tense in the line "I found a pelican's skull just near here once, I tell you". (1)
- Contrast between senses of familiarity of place to the current foreignness of it, highlighted through the hyperbole, "it was though I had reached another country" highlights the impact of personal reflection in realising the uniqueness in one's experiences. (1)
- The use of first person and repeated use of personal pronouns "I", "You" and "We" create multiple different viewpoints within the text, portraying that human experiences may differ. (1)
- By placing the climactic line of the extract "It's the fort isn't it?" in its own paragraph, the author demonstrates that through personal reflection their understanding of the experience was weighted to that moment. (1)

Question 3 (4 marks)

Answers could include:

- Low modality language: repetition of "maybe" suggests the vast and diverse processes and possibilities of human experiences (1)
- The anaphora "Go and open the door" to structure the stanzas represents the process of being human as a constant process of needing to motivate the self to be active. (1)

- Contrast between “if there’s a fog/ it will clear” suggests that processes of the human experience can be sudden. (1)
- Cumulative listing of the possibilities of what might be behind the door suggests that human experiences can lead to endless possibilities. (1)

Question 4 (7 marks)

Answers could include:

Text 2 and **Text 3** both explore the complexities of the human experience and hence invite the reader to challenge their own assumptions of the world through various thematic and literary techniques.

- **Text 2** highlights the complexity of being human by exploring the writer’s diaspora and the difficulties they face in regathering a sense of belonging to place, highlighted through the depiction of destroyed glass connoting the writer’s sense of disconnection to place. (1)
- **Text 3** explores the complexity of experience through suggesting the endless assumptions new experiences will bring to an individual with the use of cumulative listing emphasising this endlessness. (1)
- **Text 2** conveys that our experiences can have far-reaching and long-lasting impacts through the writer’s altered perspective and challenged assumptions of a place they once perceived to be exciting and full of new perspectives waiting to be explored. (1)
- **Text 3** represents the human experience as a complex process through the use of anaphora to emphasise the need to be active in our lives, which, in the end, will have transformative impacts for the individual, challenging their assumptions, as suggested through the poem’s build up of suspension to opening the door. (1)
- Both **Text 2** and **Text 3** portray the idea that challenging personal assumptions requires an active reflection on one’s self and the world in order to have enduring impacts. (1)
 - **Text 2** does this through the writer’s rediscovery of an old place. Through the effects of time, their growth as an individual apart from this place has led to a new, different perspective of the place that will remain until their next rediscovery of it. (1)
 - **Text 3** conveys this notion by directly addressing the reader with high modality directives to “go and open the door” in order to encourage them to be active in challenging their assumptions, even if it may not be far-reaching, symbolised through the metaphor “draught”. (1)