

*** Writing Exercise: *The "The" list, inspired by Ray Bradbury**

This exercise is pretty much lifted straight from a post on the click-bait Brainpickings.com site. But I've also read about this Ray Bradbury* practice elsewhere (on the internet -- it must be true!).

In its simplest form, it is a noun list. Bradbury liked to use the "the" before each word because it help concretize the words.

The lists ran something like this:

THE LAKE. THE NIGHT. THE CRICKETS. THE RAVINE. THE ATTIC. THE BASEMENT. THE TRAPDOOR. THE BABY. THE CROWD. THE NIGHT TRAIN. THE FOG HORN. THE SCYTHE. THE CARNIVAL. THE CAROUSEL. THE DWARF. THE MIRROR MAZE. THE SKELETON.



Bradbury would later come to articulate his conviction that the intuitive mind is what drives great writing, but it was through these lists that he intuited the vital pattern-recognition machinery that fuels creativity.

To do the exercise, set a timer for say three minutes. Then without stopping just do free association, making a list of nouns. Hopefully you can get 50 or more. When the timer goes, put the list aside for a few minutes -- pour another cup of tea, fetch a snack. Then go over the list to see if any connections emerge. Grab a word and start writing. If you get stuck grab another word. Write for 10 minutes.

Link to Brainpickings: <https://www.brainpickings.org/2013/10/18/ray-bradbury-on-lists/>

*Ray Bradbury was one of the major writers of science fiction beginning in the 1950s. His greatest contribution to the genre was to focus not so much on hard science and

technology, which was the prevailing trends back then -- rather he focused on the stories of people. Perhaps his two most well-known novels are "Fahrenheit 451" and "The Martian Chronicles."