                                                                                              How do professional writers ignore what they were taught at school about writing?

I have known very few writers, but those I have known, and whom I respect, confess at once that they have little idea where they are going when they first set pen to paper.

They have a character, perhaps two; they are in that condition of eager discomfort which passes for inspiration; all admit radical changes of destination once the journey has begun; one, to my certain knowledge, spent nine months on a novel about Kashmir, then reset the whole thing in the Scottish Highlands.

I never heard of anyone making a ‘skeleton’, as we were taught at school.

In the breaking and remaking, in the timing, interweaving, and beginning afresh, the writer comes to discern things in his material that were not consciously in his mind when he began.

This organic process, often leading to moments of extraordinary self-discovery, is of an indescribable fascination.

A blurred image appears; he adds a brushstroke and another, and it is gone; but something was there, and he will not rest till he has captured it.

Sometimes the yeast within a writer outlives a book he has written.

I have heard of writers who read nothing but their own books; like adolescents, they stand before the mirror, and still cannot fathom the exact outline of the vision before them.

For the same reason, writers talk interminably about their own books, wringing out hidden meanings, superimposing new ones, and begging for responses from those around them.

Of course, a writer doing this is misunderstood: he might as well try to explain a crime or a love affair.

He is also, incidentally, an unforgivable bore.

This temptation to cover the distance between himself and the reader, to study his image in the sight of those who do not know him, can be his undoing: he has begun to write to please.

A young English writer made the pertinent observation a year or two back that the talent goes into the first draft, and the art into the drafts that follow.

For this reason, also the writer, like any other artist, has no resting place, no crowd or movement in which he may take comfort, and no judgment from outside which can replace the judgment from within.

A writer makes order out of the anarchy of his heart; he submits himself more to inner discipline than any critic dreamed of, and when he flirts with fame, he is taking time off from living with himself, from the scrutiny that his world contains and requires of him.

‘All admit radical changes of destination once the journey has begun’ means all writers admit that they make major changes in a storyline even after they have begun writing.

‘This organic process’ means something like a living process, a process which is not planned, but which grows as the writer writes.

I waited with eager discomfort, like a young child waiting to go on stage for the first time to receive an award or a certificate—keen, but slightly worried and uncomfortable.

I can’t imagine how this place would pass for a five-star hotel! The service is dreadful!

He’s written the skeleton of his report, but he still has to fill in most of the details.

As they didn’t do very well in our town, the Smiths are beginning afresh in the city fifty miles away.

It was difficult to discern which of the students was telling the truth.

When the man dropped his thick glasses, all he could see was a blurred image of the nurse in front of him.

I’ve been trying to figure out how to do this for an hour, and even the instructions don’t really help.

She was a lovely old lady, but she used to talk interminably to anyone about her childhood in Africa.

The teacher was very good at wringing out the truth from children.

Without laws, society would sink into total anarchy.

You have to be completely ruthless to be successful in politics.

She seems to be taking time off work for something or other almost every week.

Few writers know where they are going when they start writing.

They may have a character or two, and be full of inspiration (or something that passes for inspiration), but all admit to radical changes of destination during the writing process.

Instead of making a ‘skeleton’, a writer rewrites and changes according to what the author calls an ‘organic process’.

Sometimes the energy that is in a writer when writing a book continues afterward.

Some writers, for example, read nothing but their own books, and some talk interminably about their own books.

They are, of course, misunderstood.

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A young English writer made the pertinent observation a year or two back that the talent goes into the first draft, and the art into the drafts that follow.

For this reason, also the writer, like any other artist, has no resting place, no crowd or movement in which he may take comfort, and no judgment from outside which can replace the judgment from within.

A writer makes order out of the anarchy of his heart.

He submits himself to more harsh discipline than any critic dreamed of, and when he flirts with fame, he is taking time off from living his subject.

He had little expectation of passing the exam.

They seem to have little appreciation for the good things in life.

There has been little improvement in the school since I left over ten years ago.

This organic process often leads to moments...

I have often heard of writers reading nothing but...

A writer doing this is misunderstood.

There’s no point in trying to persuade him: you might as well shout at the moon.

If you’ve got nothing better to do, you may as well mend that electric lamp.

We went to Scotland for a short holiday a month or so back.

I was in London a little while back when I met a very old friend of mine from university.

Passengers flying on to other destinations in Europe must first clear their baggage at this airport.

Surely you don’t believe someone can tell your destiny by looking at a pack of cards or a crystal ball?

When they reached the top of the hill, they saw a scene of indescribable beauty.

Stephen’s journey back home is undescribed in the novel.

Captured by the enemy, the soldiers were in danger of being shot.

He was arrested by the police for theft.

That is not what I meant. He must have misunderstood or misheard me.

Apparently, this is not understood by all the students.

It is said that he completed the first draft of the play within two days.

Can you close that window a bit, please, on account of the draught?

Find out everything you can, then make a judgment based on the facts.

Young people deeply resent any criticism of their friends by their parents.

According to the author, most writers he has known do not work to a detailed preconceived plan.

According to the writer, the process of writing is rather chaotic.

If a writer becomes too concerned with the reader, he might fail because he will lose touch with the creative process.

The key to good writing is not so much the original inspiration, but the quality of editing that follows the original draft.

I have known very few writers in my life.

They were taught by us at school to make a 'skeleton'.

I have heard of writers reading nothing but their own books.

Of course, a writer doing this is misunderstood.

All admit fundamental changes of destination.

An indistinct image appears.

They stand before a mirror as if they were adolescents.

A young English writer made the relevant observation.