

Object Writing

I first learned about object writing from one of my instructors Pat Pattison who teaches at Berklee College of Music. This writing technique is based on “sense bound writing” and will help generate descriptive ideas that are uniquely your own.

By writing for a timed period anywhere from 1 – 10 minutes on a chosen subject using as many senses (sound, taste, smell, touch, sight and body or motion (queasiness, dizzy, heartbeat, etc.) as possible your listener will be better able to get inside your song than if you just “tell” them about something. You’ll find more people saying, “Hey, that song is about me!”

The key to successful object writing is to stay as sense bound as possible. For example I could write "I drove over the bridge". But if I really wanted to expand on that I need to draw the listener into the scene. So you might write something like this;

"As I drove up the incline of the bridge I began to feel ball bearings running about in my stomach. I always get a little nervous being so high, it's like being on top of a skyscraper. You feel yourself swaying in the breeze and get that sense that you could almost fall over the edge. There's also that fear that the whole bridge could just drop away, like a plane dropping in turbulence."

Go wherever your mind takes you even if it veers off the main subject as it bound to do. Just try and keep writing and stay as sense bound as possible.

Here's an example of 1 minute exercise someone who wrote about Midnight: “The sound of midnight is the roar of a thousand air conditioners in the city as I lie waiting to hear her key in the door, the sigh of relief when you hear that ka-chunk-a. She's home.”

Wake your writer up every morning. Before you do anything, sit down, and write for 5 minutes. You'll find the rest of the day you're looking at the world through your writer's eyes. After a week or so the good stuff will come a lot quicker.

Show Before You Tell: Mine your object writing for titles and lyrical content. The more you write the more you write! Allow yourself to write absolute drivel and always remember “crap is the best fertilizer.”