

Still Life with Workshop

Writing Pedagogy: Activity # 218 a:

Try this for fun: have everyone bring in their All-Time Piece of Favourite Fiction or Poetry. Draw attention to how precise and beautiful and perfectly perfect these pieces of writing seem. Exult and give praise to all of this Beauty. Worship the writer(s). Commit literary idolatry: happily. Without shame or guilt.

Notice how some of the turns of phrases could not possibly be constructed in any other way. Obsess over how long it must have taken these writers to get to this level of mastery. Supplement the discussion with particularly painful and poignant descriptions of how arduous and impossible writing is.

Once everyone is suitably subdued and numb, invite them to begin writing their own perfect poem or story. Add reminders that it is absolutely imperative to get the first line right. Remind them that this is no bird course. Encourage them to take flight.