

SAN FRANCISCO WRITERS CONFERENCE
Friday, February 16, 2018
3:45 - 4:30

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AVOIDING THE PITFALLS OF NOVICE POETS

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DON'T BE TOO HARD ON YOURSELF

- Be just as hard as you need to be, without taking away the joy
- Developing a critical eye is essential
 - if you're writing for others to read, that is
 - it can be a joy in itself
- Fine balance / Zen puzzle of writing exactly what you want, but writing so that others will want to read it and will (hopefully, to some extent) get your meaning and/or what you're trying to do

ONE KEY: LEARNING TO GIVE AND RECEIVE CRITIQUE

- So that you're comfortable doing it was lots of different people
- So that it's most useful, profitable, effective
- It's so good to hear what's not working for someone (anyone), whether you end up changing it or not
- How not to be defensive receiving critique
 - Your mental inbox (preferably a nicely woven basket)
 - Never process everything on the spot
 - Assume your reaction might differ later, with thought
- How not to be offensive giving critique
 - State your reactions as honestly and positively (constructively) as you can
 - Keep it fairly brief and to the point; don't go on and on
- There's a lot more to learn about critiquing

ONCE YOU REACH A COMFORT ZONE WITH YOUR WRITING

- (you may already have)
- Balance writing what you have found works well for others/readers (your “voice”, tone, rhetoric, etc) with allowing yourself or learning to expand
 - Flourish without stagnating
 - Always try new things/forms/techniques, etc
 - Try to keep up on what current poets are writing
 - You never know what will turn you on
- If you start sending out pieces to publications, don’t be discouraged by rejection notices – we all get a lot of them
 - Always read a journal first before sending work

MY DIAGRAM FOR KEEPING WORK GOOD AND FRESH

- One of the best ways to stagnate is to stick to a formula that makes others happy
- Which doesn’t mean you shouldn’t keep writing like that (see above)
 - The dilemma of “voice” – do you really have just one?
- The value of confidence
- The value of humility
- The problem with ego
- The problem with insecurity
- Keeping an eye on each of them

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Thank you for coming to our session!

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For more information on Richard Loranger,
including books, readings, videos, art, and esoterica,
please check out www.richardloranger.com.