

Tucson, 7/27/99

What does it take to write ? How do you bring forth your thoughts so that they have meaning? Pouring a jar of honey upon your paper and watching it spread, waiting for form to emerge from chaos, order from disorder. Hoping some insight that will change the human condition, for the better, expresses itself in the tumbled jumble of words. But you can't focus on the end product, be blinded by the epiphany. Instead you have to take each step, building an edifice one brick at a time. The grand scheme is only a wish floating back in your mind as each block in the structure becomes the endpoint of your thought. The words will lead you where they want...no, where they need to go. All you have to do is find the courage to begin following them.

Essentially I am a lazy man. I don't like to push myself when it is unneeded. But without passion or some deep abiding interest in what we are doing, most of us are lazy. If you cannot bend your heart to a task, you cannot effectively channel your will. Without will, eventually your efforts fail. No matter how much energy you expend beating your head against the wall. So how to focus will? How to achieve what our heart whispers we dream but where our feet fear to tread? I think it must come first with affirmation. You must tell yourself and others where you want to go. As an alcoholic must first admit individually to the problem, so a writer must confess this deep need, the drive that demands that we allow our muse to speak. No journey can begin without this conscious statement of intent and desire that can, once expressed, be translated into will and thus action. You can't accidentally write a novel. It is a deliberate action, an attempt at immortality that cannot truly succeed but which makes our brief stay on this ball of rock seem more palatable, more meaningful.

On our deathbed we can leave little behind us - children, some fond memories for a few select loved ones, only a ripple at work; soon to fade. But writing offers a chance at immortality. A chance normally reserved for military heroes or politicians. Only rarely does artistic genius rise above the hordes of mediocrity and touch enough people that a legend can grow. Only once in a lifetime perhaps. But who knows, its may be your fate, or mine. We will never know until we offer our efforts to the cold world, survive the buffeting currents, and, just maybe, achieve greatness.