

**Chloe Martinez / The New Mother, In California Before the End Times**

After the rain, how good it is to walk out and feel  
the sun on your shoulders! The baby in her stroller

chattering in protest, then asleep. The grey-green olive trees  
shine wetly, the silver-grey eucalyptus trees are a scent

you walk through on Mills Avenue carrying with you the knowledge  
that around the corner is a tree with a hundred figs

just beginning to ripen. How good to be somewhere still  
new to you, to crunch fried sardines in the Filipino supermarket

on a good day, a day when you did not say that terrible thing  
to your sister, when you did not stand where a great sharp palm frond

fell with a crash, when you did not show up late for your own  
public talk. You have hung the hammock that you bought

in Mexico ten years ago, the one you've been carrying in a box  
from one rented apartment to the next, from state to state to state—

you have taken it from the box and thrown the box away  
and hung the hammock up with some strange bright orange

nylon tie-down straps you found at the hardware store, and it looks  
pretty stupid, honestly, but when you lie in it you can still see

the insanely blue sky and the edge of that fig tree. It is not yet that time  
when you will be afraid to let your husband, a citizen, leave the country,

when irrational fears will become reasonable ones. The baby's teeth  
not yet emerged from her gums, the air sweet on your two bodies.

Today you think, briefly, that you might be just the person to give yourself  
advice on how to live, though you are under-qualified at best, and at worst

you might be giving yourself some kind of carpal tunnel, holding the baby  
at that odd angle all the time, clutching at something else with your free hand.

**How to Become Detail-Oriented / Patricia Caspers**

Put down your name,  
the sound of it  
in your father's mouth—  
the grumble of an El Camino  
as it races center street,  
the wish of its passing  
so close you could almost  
touch your fingers  
to the sun-strewn glass.

Put down the mud,  
the sweet animal  
scent of the midnight  
river where you stood,  
a barefoot girl  
slinging a starry line  
to the catfish  
as your father buzzed  
his laughter from the rushes,  
how you hoped a fish  
might divulge secrets  
from its depths,  
how you feared

its barbel sting.

Replace the whistle,  
the small locomotive  
of your breath  
thrumming the reeds  
of your father's  
forbidden harmonica,  
inhaling the silver  
taste of his blues  
between your lips.

Still the film  
of the San Francisco  
skyline, a cold blur  
between girders,  
the heartbeat  
of decking  
below your car tires,  
and beyond, the sound  
of his last phone call,  
a question,  
the one time  
you heard  
your father cry.

Denise Delgado / Excerpt, *Inheritance*

Phones start going off. Ping ping ping ping ping. There are only a few other customers and news ricochets around the store like dominoes falling. Excited voices rise aisles away but I can't decipher the words. And later I can't believe I didn't know right away, but I've been so long away from Miami's dramas and immersed in Barcelona's that it doesn't even occur to me. What is it, I keep saying under my breath, like an outsider, until my own phone goes off. First, a text that I don't get to read, because then, for the first time since I left Spain, Sonia calls me on WhatsApp.

The connection awful as always. Has to be some emergency. A bomb? A shooting? Something to do with the U.S. elections? Static strangles my mother's voice. She's shouting, Valentina! Do you hear me?

And I'm shouting, Sonia! Sonia? ¿Si, si, what happened?

Because half of Miami is craning their necks or bending their ears to their phones at this very moment, an empleada restocking the shelves comes around the end of the aisle to help me out. She points at her phone and makes a cutting motion across her neck with her finger. Fidel, she hisses.

He *died*? Just now?

Yes! She points to the TV opposite the counter. Raul sitting at a desk.

Fidel? Fidel *Castro*?

What other Fidel is it going to be? she says in Spanish.

Finally the static on the call dies down. Por fin se murió el hijo de puta, Sonia is saying. I'm getting on a plane first thing in the morning.

Wait, you're coming here *now*?

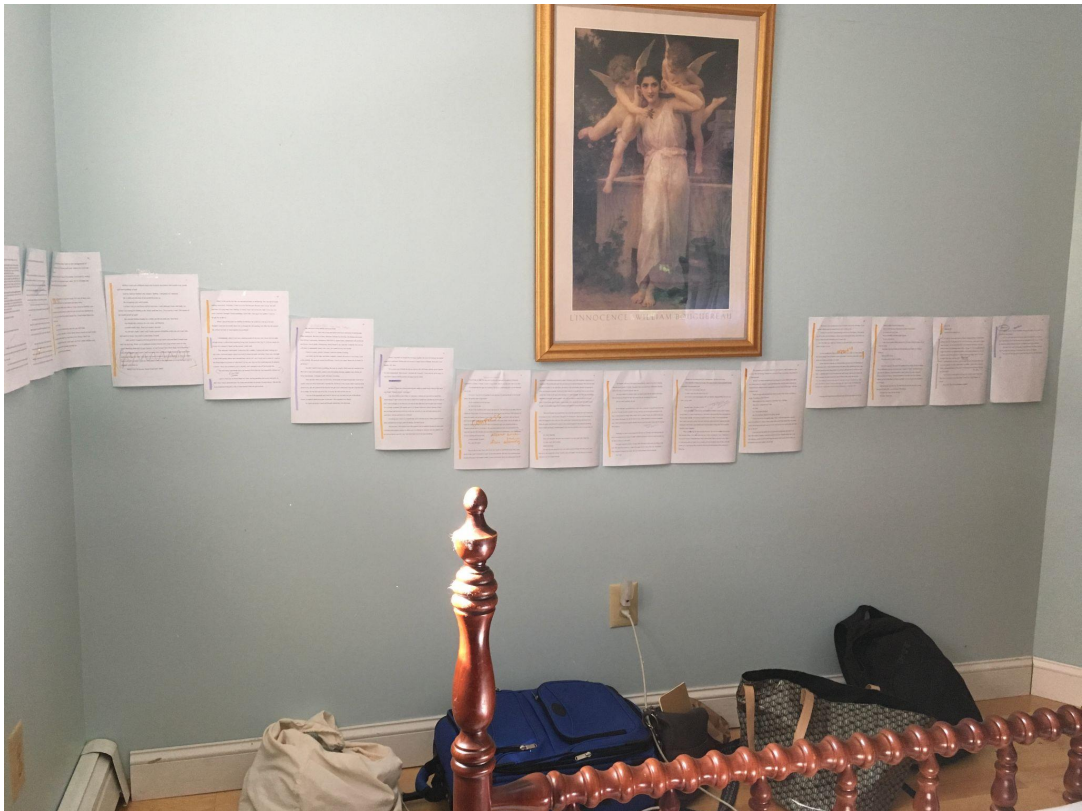
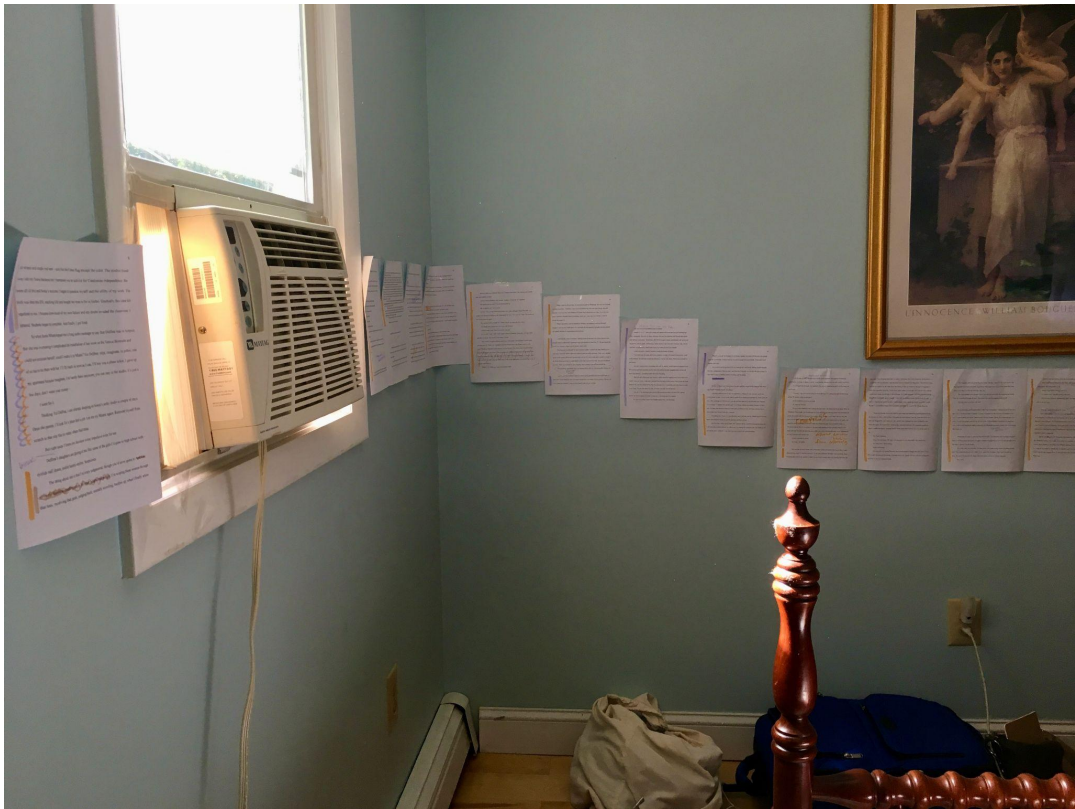
Yes! Static.

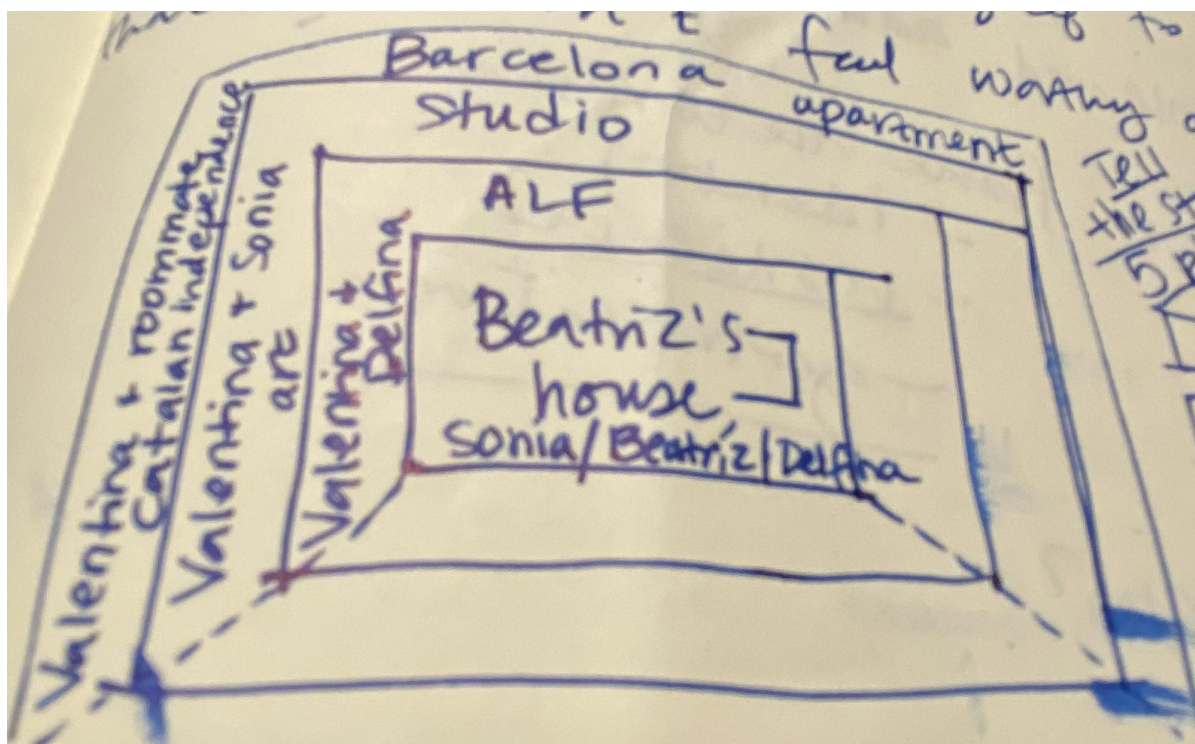
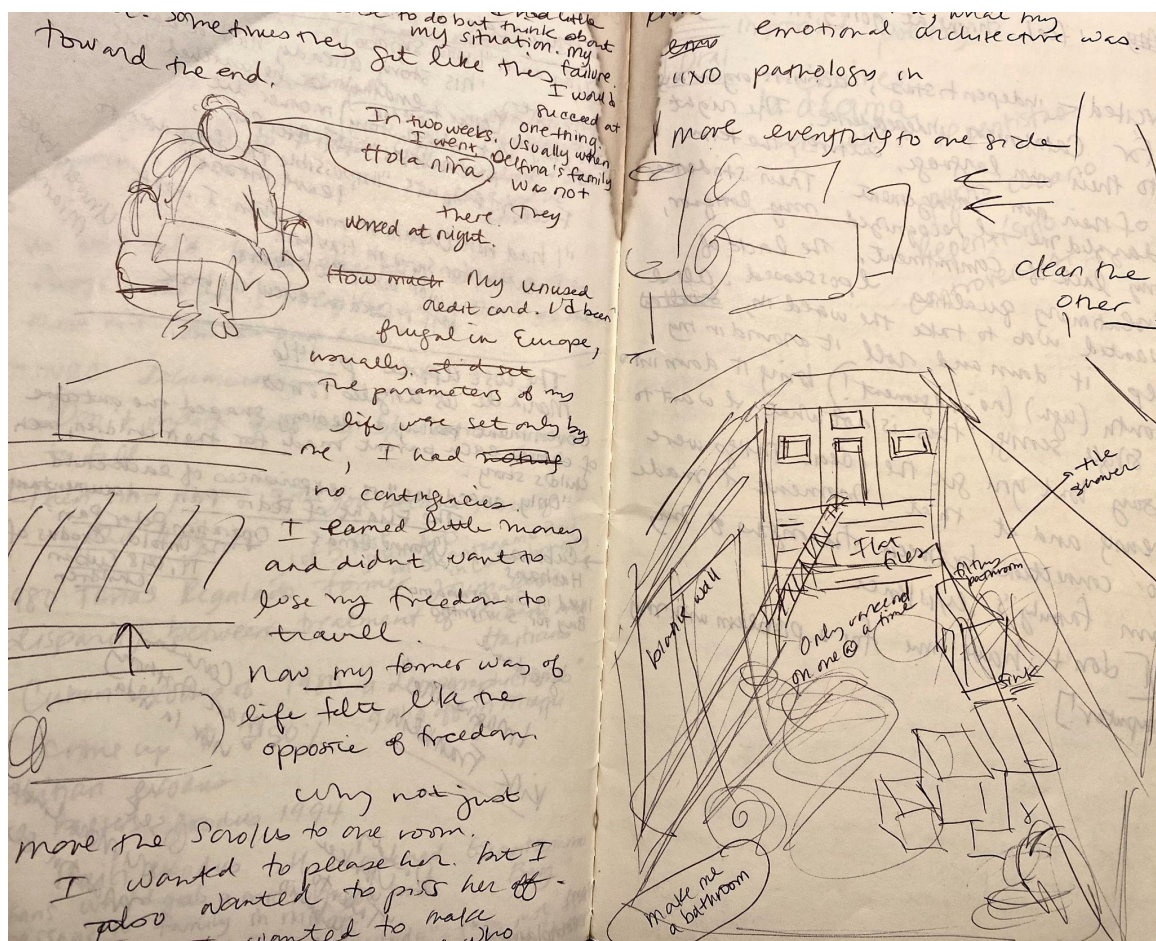
Now? For Fidel? Not because of Delfina?

Her voice goes fuzzy. Everything, Sonia is saying.

I am furious. So incredibly angry. Where it has been near impossible to return in time to see Delfina alive, my mom gets a Venice-Miami flight just for Fidel already dead. Sonia has always had a rigid moody quiet logic and no one could talk her out of an idea once it got into her. But this?

I walk home from the market with my broom and my bleach and a new panic in my chest. Sonia flies in tomorrow at noon. Inside her studio there's a broken wall, a bathroom smeared with muddy footprints, strewn with broken tile and new bath fixtures, and two of her own half-finished scroll pieces coated in drywall dust. With all my being, I crave to be safe and normal in Barcelona.





“Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide, and bipolar disorder (also called manic depression) falls under this definition. So, it’s not only me—of course, it cannot only be me. However, my experience of this disease is of isolation, the feeling of having to hide, the pressure to display a wellness I did not entirely possess.

What is essential to who I am? I can’t imagine being someone other than South Asian American and the writer I am—but what has taken most of my time and energy is navigating work situations (specifically academia, but also secondary schools where I taught). I did not feel I could be out about a chronic mental health condition, especially since I looked (and was) young and appeared to be healthy and able-bodied. And yet this disorder has affected everything in my life for the last twenty years.”

Sejal A. Shah, “Even If You Can’t See It: Invisible Disability and Neurodiversity,  
*Kenyon Review*

Lisa Van Orman Hadley

## MAD LIB ACTIVITY

type of event: \_\_\_\_\_

noun: \_\_\_\_\_

occupation, plural: \_\_\_\_\_

adjective: \_\_\_\_\_

plural noun: \_\_\_\_\_

adjective: \_\_\_\_\_

verb ending in "ing": \_\_\_\_\_

verb ending in "ing": \_\_\_\_\_

plural noun: \_\_\_\_\_

feeling (e.g. joy, hunger): \_\_\_\_\_

verb ending in "ing": \_\_\_\_\_

emotion ending in "ed" or "y": \_\_\_\_\_

noun: \_\_\_\_\_

a place: \_\_\_\_\_

### THE 2023 AWP CONFERENCE & BOOKFAIR

The AWP Conference & \_\_\_\_\_ (type of event) is the annual  
\_\_\_\_\_ (noun) for writers, \_\_\_\_\_ (occupation, plural),  
and publishers of \_\_\_\_\_ (adjective) writing. It includes thousands of  
\_\_\_\_\_ (plural noun), hundreds of \_\_\_\_\_ (adjective) events,  
and four days of \_\_\_\_\_ (verb ending in "ing") and  
\_\_\_\_\_ (verb ending in "ing"). The AWP Conference has always been a  
place of \_\_\_\_\_ (plural noun), \_\_\_\_\_ (feeling), and  
\_\_\_\_\_ (verb ending in "ing"), and we are \_\_\_\_\_ (emotion  
ending in "ed" or "y") to see the writing \_\_\_\_\_ (noun) come together again  
in \_\_\_\_\_ (a place) in 2023.

## Glossary

**gloss · a · ry** |'gläs-ə-rē|

NOUN

plural *glossaries*

an alphabetical list of terms or words found in or relating to a specific subject, text, or dialect, with explanations; a brief dictionary.

1. The daughter makes a *glossary* of the peculiar things the mother and father say.

**gosh** |gäSH| **dag · nab · it** |dagnabit|

EXCLAMATION

a euphemism for a widely-used phrase in which a deity is invoked to curse someone to heck, which is another euphemism for a widely-used word representing the devil's fiery realm. This substitution is most often made by those averse to swearing and those strictly observing the Third Commandment. This aversion to curse words may be imposed by one's self, one's religious institution, or one's spouse.

1. When the father misses a serve during a tennis match, he slaps his palm to his forehead and screams, "*Gosh dagnabit*, Bob, you flipping idiot!"

Irreversible Things • 7

**guy · sies** |gīzēz|

NOUN

plural of the plural form of *guy*

typically used as a term of endearment to identify or address a group of people with whom the speaker feels particularly close, usually members of one's own family.

1. The family is playing a card game. The mother, out of nowhere, says, "*Guysies*, I like books about little mice."

singular form (rare): *guysie*

2. When all the children have left the nest, the mother turns to the father and says, "Guess it's just you and me, *guysie*."

**heav · ens** |'hevəns| **to** |toō| **Bet · sy** |betsē|

NOUN, PREPOSITION, PROPER NOUN

an exclamation of disapproval or disgust, having nothing to do with an angelic abode or a woman named Betsy.

1. The mother takes the daughter to a movie. When they return to the car after the movie has ended, they discover that they have left the lights on and the engine is dead. The mother nervously calls the father from the payphone in the movie theater to tell him what has happened. He yells, "*Heavens to Betsy*, Ellen! Can't you do anything right?" and then promptly grabs the keys and rushes to the car to rescue them.

**woo · ey** |woōē|

EXCLAMATION

used to express delight, surprise, or disapproval

1. The mother's parents call to invite the father and the mother to join them on a trip to Egypt. The mother hangs up and remains sitting in the chair saying, "*Wooley! Wooley! Wooley!*" over and over again before she finally gets up to fold the laundry.
2. The mother is in the kitchen doing dishes late at night after the children have been tucked into bed. The father goes around to the backside of the house and lights his face up with a flashlight outside the window where the mother is washing the dishes. The

mother screams, calms down a bit and, resuming her scrubbing, says, "Wooley!"

3. The mother is watching a movie with her family. The couple on the screen begins to kiss passionately. The mother squirms in her chair and says, "Wooley! They sure don't kiss like they used to. It looks like they're eating each other!"

woo · ey | woōē | guy · sies | gīzēz |

EXCLAMATION FOLLOWED BY THE PLURAL OF A PLURAL NOUN

used to express extreme delight, surprise, or disapproval to a group of people with whom the speaker feels extremely close, almost always members of one's own family.

1. The mother comes home, all lit up from a church activity she has just attended.

She exclaims, "Wooley guysies, women love crafts!"

The daughter challenges her on this, saying, "Mom, you don't even like crafts."

The mother, modifying her statement, says, "Wooley guysies, most women love crafts!"

2. The daughter often says "Wooley guysies!" in mimicry of the mother. She uses it at first to poke fun at the mother and then, later, because she finds it endearing.

## Irreversible Things

**JULY 13, 1986.** The buzzing has stopped. The cicadas must have gone underground again. When I looked in the Ci-Cz volume of the *World Book*, it said that the adults lay their eggs underground and then they die. Their babies will grow up under the azalea bush and then one summer they will come out and leave their skins on the trees and sing their love songs to each other. Then they, too, will die. Like everything else. The next time they come out I'll be twenty years old and I probably won't even live in Florida anymore. I'll be away at college like Sara.

I wonder if Oz will ever come back.

**JULY 12, 1986.** My mother, Jonny, Mark, and I play Clue. It is my mother's favorite game, but she's sad tonight. The boys and I fight over who gets to be Colonel Mustard. I ask my mother why it's spelled C-O-L-O-N-E-L if it sounds like "kernel"? My mother says she doesn't know.

I am used to my mother knowing everything. It both scares and thrills me that I can ask questions she doesn't know the answers to.

Jonny says I have to be a girl because I'm a girl. I can either be Miss Scarlet, Mrs. Peacock, or Mrs. White. I ask my mother why Miss Scarlet is smoking a long cigarette in the picture on the box and whether she's a

# Women's Lib

There was a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ woman who lived in a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.  
ADJECTIVE NOUN (PLACE)

She had so \_\_\_\_\_, she didn't \_\_\_\_\_;  
ADJECTIVE DENOTING QUANTITY PLURAL NOUN

\_\_\_\_\_ what to \_\_\_\_\_;  
VERB (PRESENT TENSE) VERB (PRESENT TENSE)

She gave them some \_\_\_\_\_ without any \_\_\_\_\_;  
NOUN (THING) NOUN (THING)

Then \_\_\_\_\_ them all \_\_\_\_\_ and put them to \_\_\_\_\_.  
VERB (PAST TENSE) (ADVERB) NOUN (THING)

Lisa Van Orman Hadley, "Women's Lib," in *Irreversible Things* (Minneapolis: Howling Bird Press, 2019), 43.

Some things that have recently helped me:

- the Pomodoro Technique
- bullet journaling
- noise-canceling headphones (but some people with ADHD need noise in order to write!)
- writing group or anything that has a deadline/accountability to someone (writing contest, residency application, etc.)
- letting go of expectations of what being a writer *should* look like
- creating rhythms/patterns (not routines)
- a system for organizing my documents
- meds and therapy

**Daniel Jenkins**

Some things that have helped me:

- Reading in parking garages, preferably the top floor, in the car, with the car off, and the windows up to eliminate all noise
- A book called *On Being a Writer*, by Dorothea Brande, written in the 1930s, not about the technical art of writing, but the existential quality of writing. It focuses on the subconscious mind, eliminating blocks that hinder the free flow of ideas. It sounds *pseudo-sciency*, but it is in my top five most impactful writing helps
- Polyrhythmic music. YouTube is full of examples. Polyrhythms, supposedly, stimulate the mind with ADHD and allow it to focus on two concurrent strands of music in different time signatures and tempos
- My phone. The best drafted poems (so far) have been tapped out on my phone. Because I type 85 words per minute, the phone slows me down, forces me to consider diction, rhythm, and lineation. It is a succinct but flexible way of clarifying ideas.
- While poetic form can seem stale, I find that the “rules” inherent in form provide the most relief for my mind when writing poems. Any line-limited form is worthy of experimentation. And plus, form is hard, and therefore worth doing for practice.
- What Lisa said, “letting go of expectations of what being a writer *should* look like.” It has helped me to really embrace the bat-s\*\*t crazy ideas that come from my brain. If you enjoy, say, military history as a poet, embrace those two loves at the same time. I once wrote a poem about an American airman who survived a 23,000 foot fall from his B-17 during World War II. Two seemingly different realms of study and expression can marry well.
- This is an exciting time for writers of any genre. New forms and media give neurodivergent writers opportunities to reprise forms, like the serial, using Medium and Kindle Vella, for example. Hybrid forms, like lyric essay, and visual forms like ekphrasis, and others, are perfect for the ADHD mind.
- Ditto. Meds, therapy, and AA.
- For those with co-occurring conditions (comorbid sounds so ... morbid), you have inherent value and worth that can sometimes seem absent when the seeming stability of others in the world seems so, well, stable. But that’s their thing, and ADHD is our thing. Both are valuable, and so are you.

## Word Search

e e j w v b y s e n s o r y s b s r b w  
z t a u a y y e e j t b e i k j s t v c  
l o s i n z e r g k f i n v e r a l t f  
e n p j w c s c a n s i o n s p w x q k  
c e r e p e t i t i o n t r u b e u e x  
s l t b n e n x a r u t i m a g e r y i  
i l i r y u n t r f s d q e s x n s t a  
m w p c i y l t c s x l g t t v r x h m  
i r s b h t s t a b h v k e a e x r k b  
l y f p a e e p i m n y w r n r w f t i  
e o l y e g k o x m e u m i z s m e l c  
g u u g e a o v o b a t p o a e y s r x  
r c v w t b k o c n w t e n n f o r m m  
a k a d q r l e s x x f e r y g o k n e  
v k g d q v f q r o p s m x k a d v k t  
e o e r h y t h m a m t z l v d w o v a  
n j t m o o b i s h i e h c l d e i u p  
w x e r h y m e w w m j o e y f r c z h  
m l x o f i g u r a t i v e m z v e u o  
y r t m p c q g h t m t f u g e y d c r