

Real Writer

Someone asked me the other day if I was a real writer. I said I didn't think so. A real writer smokes a pipe and lives in a castle. Or at least in a mountain-top aerie, away in a far off land. In modern times, a real writer probably would live half way up a concrete canyon in Manhattan. He would wear a presentable cardigan sweater as he sat at his typewriter. I have a cardigan sweater and when my wife allows it, I wear it on cold days, but not if company is coming. It's pretty ratty. But it's always been special to me since someone on the street put a quarter in my hand while I was wearing it. So, to me it's a reminder. It reminds me there are lots of different ways to make money.

And, of course, I don't live in a castle. I live in an old house, but it's not as old as a castle and we have central heat and indoor plumbing. I've always been pretty impressed by indoor plumbing and wouldn't want to be without it. I don't think I'd get very much writing done because it's such a long walk back to the woods.

Real writers begin their task by constructing an outline, often before putting pen to paper. I usually write the last sentence first. Real writers limit their expository paragraphs, check their facts, use that Thessa thing and a dictionary and proceed to write in a straight line. I, on the other hand, never check anything and don't know what I'm talking about most of the time. And the rest of the time I'm faking it.

Real writers have an editor to spruce up their prose. I read my stuff to the dog and usually

don't get an argument from her. I thought twice before writing the last sentence because I don't want to be accused of animal cruelty. I've always had this feeling that the damned dog wouldn't testify favorably on my behalf. Anyway, Erebus is really my wife's dog. And for a black lab, she's barely literate.

Real writers use proper punctuation and don't write run-on sentences. I don't know anything about punctuation but I just love run-on sentences because they're so efficient and I don't need to add extra pronouns or think up synonyms to avoid repeats and I can forget all those silly rules that Sister Clementia taught me back in fifth grade and better known writers than me don't seem to worry about it.



Real writers are famous. Now, there I come closer to the definition. For I am indeed famous, if only a tiny bit. I take my articles down to Office Depot and have hundreds of copies made, which I stuff in the mail boxes of unsuspecting residents along the road. I've gotten some pretty curious reactions.

Mrs. Granella down the road always says sweet things to me when I deliver a story and offers me cookies, so I think she has the hots for me. But at 81 she's too old for me. And besides, Erebus would tell on me. That damned dog follows me everywhere.

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