

## Finding the Words that Feel "Write"

by Peter H. Reynolds

I am a big believer in words. I love them. They don't have to be long and complicated. Little words that pack a punch are my favorites. Simple, gentle words. Words that evoke dreamy feelings.

Lull... mull... whisper... velvet... adrift.

I hunt for words like those the way I seek out the cream-filled in a box of chocolates. (FYI: I'm not fond of the jelly filled.)

Think about it. We all have favorites. Favorite colors. Favorite places. Favorite pieces of clothing. I am convinced that we have favorite words - certain words that rise to the top. Words that trigger feelings in us that may not do the same for others.

In my high school days I had a friend, Evelyn, whose favorite words were "cellar door." I asked her why and she told me that they sounded beautiful together. The sound they made together captured her rather than their meaning. 15 year old Evelyn was the first person in the history of our civilization to think that thought and have it make sense. It made sense to her. That was original and brave.

One of the keys to writing is knowing if you are writing for others or writing for yourself. Many people have trouble writing because they worry what others will think of their writing. This constant concern about how the work will be received can gum up the works. Conveying the intended meaning is certainly valid, but it should not be the overriding rule.

Try writing for yourself. If it helps, have the fireplace handy. As soon as you're done writing, toss your words in the flames, not because your words aren't good enough, but to reinforce that the words were just for you. The moment we wonder what others will think, we are writing for them and not ourselves. When you write for yourself you can break rules, throw grammar to the wind, invent words, scribble, meander, and let what is in your heart appear as ink on paper. Give yourself permission to find a way - your own way - of expressing yourself. It's a rare and delightful treat.

What are YOUR favorite words?

Try writing a list of them.

Let them serve to inspire a poem or a story.

Welcome to the sudden lull,  
A chance to ponder and to mull.  
Listen, Dear, for nature's whisper,  
Of velvet dreams adrift in winter.

Imagine when looking at a vocabulary list in school, we had been asked to star our top 3 favorite words? I remember being taken by the word "fuchsia" in third grade. It made an unexpected

sound and when I discovered its meaning it bloomed in color! Amazing what six letters strung together could do! That really got me going on my journey of finding my own collection of words.

I'm adding words to my list of favorites as I go, always looking for new ones. Keeping my ears open to how they sound, what colors they paint, how they tug on my heart and then, joyfully, gluing them together in new ways.

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