

Elusive Ideas in a Pineapple Under the Sea

by Laura Preble

I have had a few moments in my life where I could clearly touch the spring from which ideas bubble up, that imaginary pool at the middle of the subconscious. Those few fleeting moments were amazing, simple, uncomplicated, focused, crystal-clear.

Unfortunately, I only rarely find my way back there. Why is this? I believe the answer lies with Spongebob SquarePants.

Why would this porous cartoon icon have anything to do with my ability to get in touch with the steaming whirlpool of creativity at the center of my soul? Because he never shuts up, that's why. It's too noisy for me to find my way. And it's not just Spongebob. It's also the freeway outside, the sound of dogs barking, the constant cries of "mom!", and a dozen other voices from inside myself. I am not blaming everyone else (well, maybe Spongebob), because I make more noise than anybody. I am forever babbling in my head, mostly unproductive and negative scripts along the lines of "why bother writing?" or "you might as well eat that cupcake because at least you know you'll feel a nanosecond of joy before the guilt kicks in" or "when will the aliens come and shut off our TVs?"

I guess what I'm trying to say is that I need to find more time and space to be quiet, so simply focus on finding my way to that magical place, like Lucy found Narnia. When she was looking for it, she couldn't find it; when she relaxed and let it happen, she could. I want to do that. How? That is my personal quest for the moment. I have been searching for the next step in my writing career, looking around every corner, and maybe I need to just slip into the silence and let the lion come to me.

I hope he doesn't live in a pineapple under the sea.

