

Gravity Does Not Apply

by Laura Preble

I was holed up in my son's room the other day, doing a sort of meditation. I was holed up in his room because I was trying hard not to be disturbed, and he never goes in there, except to sleep. He likes to be in the middle of the action, you know.

Anyway, I was thinking about writing, meditating on the magical process that is at once simple and impossible. Clarity and honesty are the two qualities that lead to true, excellent writing, and they are often ridiculously elusive, especially in my house where chaos is our cleaning lady. Of late, I've been on a silent safari, waiting patiently in quiet for clarity and honesty to find me, because they are not animals you can track down and catch, no matter how pure your motivations.

As I sat in the room surrounded by jungle animal paintings and a gushing fountain of art supplies, I closed my eyes and an image came to me: an image of a lovely, closed-in garden perfumed with white moonflowers, hung with green-glossy vines dripping rain. I saw myself there, quiet, and before me was a stack of translucent blue marbles, blue like the earth from space. I was stacking them, and as I put one to another, they formed a double helix pillar stretching up to the sky, into infinity. The word I heard in my mind was this: "Gravity."

Gravity? What does that have to do with writing or with this improbable tether of blue marbles?

Then I understood. Gravity does not apply. In the world of honesty, clarity, and true writing, *gravity does not apply*. The weight that keeps us tethered to the earth—the obligations, the jobs, the physical ills, self doubt, the mental suffering, the telemarketers, television noise, the teenagers with angst and the husbands with missing keys—these forces of gravity do not apply in this space. Of course, the task of releasing gravity and its various helpers is the tough part. Letting them go, and honoring that phrase sounds simple but is one of the hardest things to do.

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Gravity has lots of meanings. It is a physical force, of course, that keeps us from flying off the earth, but it's also the idea of seriousness, of being grave, of assigning the proper amount of worry to matters of the world. Does this help us as writers? If we are burdened by the gravity of writing the next big thing, or of writing something that will change the world, or of pleasing our agent/ editor/critique group, can we ever really be released?

So today when I close the door to my writing sanctuary, I will begin my meditation by chanting my new motto, and I will ride that trail of blue marbles to the next piece of my writing puzzle. I can't wait to see what a lack of gravity will do for me.

