

**"In Spite of Thunder
(or Flight from a
Burning Tree)":
An Exercise in Poetic
Recklessness**

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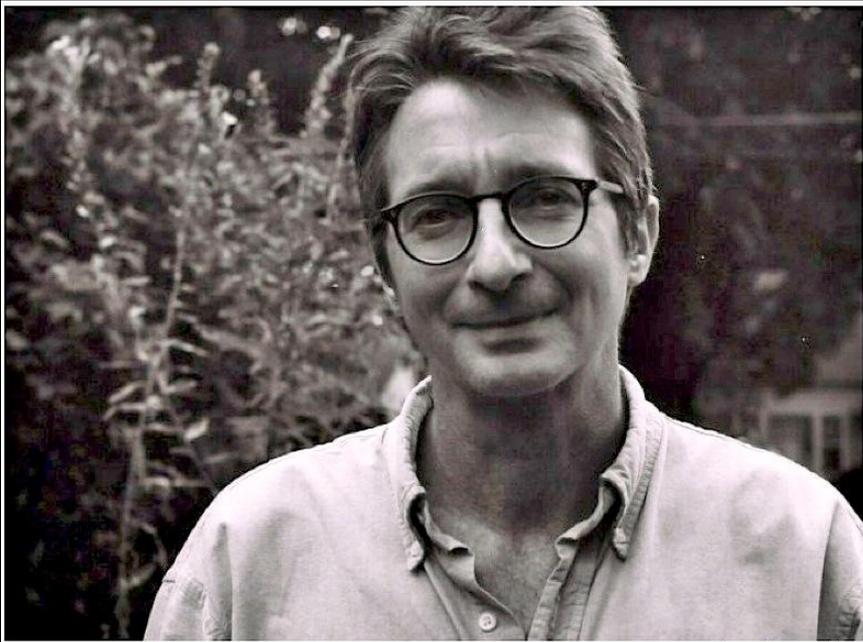
Starting Points

Personal Criteria

- Creative (Poetry)
- Research component
- Develop writing style

Starting Points

Methods



Laurie Saurborn Young

Dean Young, poet (b. 1955)

The Art of Recklessness (2010)

- Emphasis on writing process over product
- “At every moment the poet must be ready to abandon any prior intention in welcome expectation of what the poem is beginning to signal. More than intending, the poet ATTENDS!”
(Young 4)

Starting Points

Early Excerpt

V. Elegy

When your beginning was over,
no one sought out a small, solemn boat and pair
of eager oars to sail
away and find you.

No one locked themselves up in a burning
lighthouse to watch for you.

I unlaced my boots and listened
for weeks to creaking furniture, soap
spreading itself over vital
skin, and flakes of winter slipping into
rooms where you and I had made
staggering accusations to
the human race for who knows
how long.

Our beautiful neighbor
continues to choke at his breakfast;
books and cupboards persist in
closing.

The foolish lights we considered walking
under, for the sake of breaking
the veritable world somewhat open,

still do not suggest
what exactly it is that
holds even the tallest of
mysteries together, and
still refuse
to go out.

Wherever you ended up,
I wonder if you, too, are noticing these things;

if it's any easier there to get the last word—

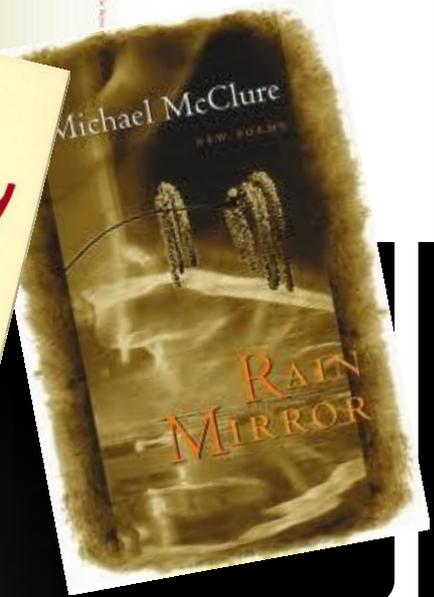
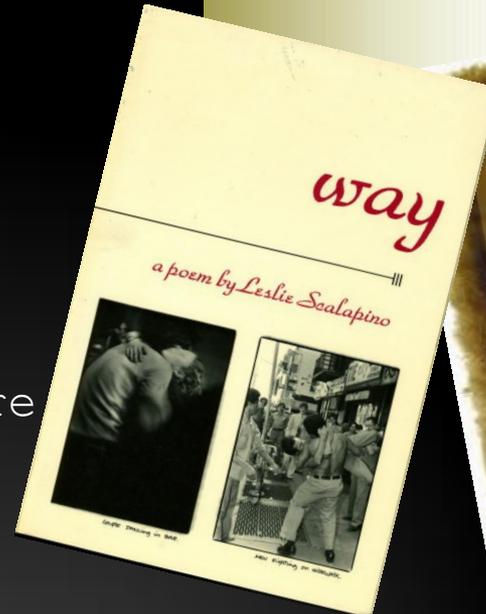
if you are still giving yourself away
in indiscernible quantities—

if, there, it is also true that some people never get
old enough to do what you did.

Development *Methods*

Serial/ Sequence Poetry

- Individual pieces in sequence are related while independent
- Fragmented stanzas
- Unusual capitalization
- Strong sense of voice
- Disjointed thought structure



Development

Principles of Recklessness

Young: "The error is not to fall but to fall from no height" (6).

"Poetry can't be harmed by people trying to write it" (5).

Lessing: "[Find a] place of stillness that allows you to hear yourself think, to come to decisions you trust and to cut through all the clutter and complication of the everyday to see what matters and what will last" (Bures 50).

Nichols: "Be willing to write badly. Be willing to write and fail."

...and adopt serial/sequence format for some sense of cohesion

Results

Later Excerpts

XI. Train

I no longer like taking anything apart

But I dreamed this morning that I lay on the
railroad tracks

That stretch through the town I am from
And I was surrounded by gods
And it was my job to sleep there dusk to dawn

I think it was in fulfillment of some
Kind of agreement but I couldn't tell you

And I don't subscribe to reincarnation
But it got me thinking

If we all used to be something else
And something else before we were that

Then do we die as one being
The moment right before
We're conceived as another
Or is there some grace period
When you get to hang out as nothing at all
Or just enjoy the scenery, whatever
That may be?

Anyway I awoke
And this afternoon the light caught me
Just right in the mirror of my windshield and
I saw myself aged 30 years
And understood what people see when
They say I look just like my red-headed mother

And I wondered if she ever wrote poetry.

Results

Later Excerpts

XII. Falling is a Type of Flight

I watch the silent vein in your neck
bulge and gasp.

You bite back at your own syllables,

as if my
not knowing yet makes the sentence
lighter,
slows the speed so you can watch
your match strike against its strip
and understand,
*this is a match, this is
its strip, and this
is the moment
when you can expect flame,
all at once,*

as if I
am still safe in the branches
of the tree you are flying from.

*

When I finally descend,
when I fall, build
a new nest

but do not build a new bird.



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Works Cited

Bures, Frank. "Inner Space: Clearing Some Room for Inspiration." *Poets and Writers* Jan. 2012: 48-52. Print.

Nichols, Cindy. Personal interview. 27 Nov. 2012.

Young, Dean. *The Art of Recklessness: Poetry as Assertive Force and Contradiction*. Minneapolis: Graywolf, 2010. Print.