



## Several Short Sentences About Writing

By Verlyn Klinkenborg



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An indispensable and distinctive book that will help anyone who wants to write, write better, or have a clearer understanding of what it means for them to be writing, from widely admired writer and teacher Verlyn Klinkenborg.

Klinkenborg believes that most of our received wisdom about how writing works is not only wrong but an obstacle to our ability to write. In *Several Short Sentences About Writing*, he sets out to help us unlearn that “wisdom”—about genius, about creativity, about writer’s block, topic sentences, and outline—and understand that writing is just as much about thinking, noticing, and learning what it means to be involved in the act of writing. There is no gospel, no orthodoxy, no dogma in this book. Instead it is a gathering of starting points in a journey toward lively, lucid, satisfying self-expression.

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## Editorial Review

Review

### **Praise for Verlyn Klinkenborg's *Several Short Sentences About Writing*:**

"No other book, old or new, is as well reasoned as this, as entertaining or as wise. . . . Best book on writing. Ever. . . . To paraphrase Voltaire's statement concerning the Almighty, 'if Verlyn Klinkenborg did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him.' Because having read *Several Short Sentences About Writing*, I do not think that it would be possible to not have this book on hand. . . . Indeed, no other book is as filled with as much grounded, practical advice for putting words to the paper or electronic page or gives better, more helpful exercises."

—*New York Journal of Books*

"Powerful . . . each sentence miraculously contains an idea or insight that lesser writers would have milked for several pages."

—*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

"An exceptionally interesting and useful book about writing."

—Tom McGuane

"A fresh perspective on writing that goes against conventional classroom theory."

—*Shelf Awareness*

"Klinkenborg does away with much of the traditional wisdom on writing and dissects the sentence—its structure, its intention, its semantic craftsmanship—to deliver a new, useful, and direct guide to the art of storytelling."

—*Brain Pickings*

"Expertise and zeal are required for an established writer to offer genuinely useful guidance to aspiring writers. It also helps if the writer teaches writing, as Klinkenborg has for many years. . . . The result is a unique anatomy of the sentence and the writing mind and a clarifying and invigorating 'book of first steps.'"

—*Booklist*

"This is a very interesting little book about writing. Modest. Learned. Good-natured. Direct and sympathetic to its readers. You don't even have to read it front to back (probably you couldn't, anyway). You can just open it anywhere—as I did—and take away something useful."

—Richard Ford

"There have been good books on grammar and style, some classics, but none to compare to this one for understanding where sentences come from in the first place, where their vitality is found, and what distinguishes their energy, their authenticity, and their prospects for life after birth—that is, the art of revision. This book's long future will be a testament to its author's principles."

—Tom McGuane

About the Author

**Verlyn Klinkenborg** is a member of the editorial board of *The New York Times*, to which he also contributes meditations about his farm in upstate New York, collected in *The Rural Life*. His other books include *Making Hay*, *The Last Fine Time*, and *Timothy; or, Notes of an Abject Reptile*. Klinkenborg has a Ph.D. in English literature from Princeton University.

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\*

Your job as a writer is making sentences.  
Most of your time will be spent making sentences in your head.  
In your head.  
Did no one ever tell you this?  
*That* is the writer's life.  
Never imagine you've left the level of the sentence behind.

Most of the sentences you make will need to be killed.  
The rest will need to be fixed.  
This will be true for a long time.  
The hard part now is deciding which to kill and which  
to fix and how to fix them.  
This will get much, much easier, but the decision making will never end.

\*

As you practice noticing, notice how thickly particled  
with names the world around you is.  
This will gradually become part of your noticing,  
looking not for words to make us see the way you saw--  
But for the names of what you've noticed.  
Names that announce the whatness of the world to a single species.

It's hard to grasp at first the density, the specificity  
With which the world has been named.  
This is a planet of overlapping lexicons,  
Generation after generation, trade after trade,  
Expedition after expedition sent out to bring home  
Name upon name, terms of identity in endless degrees of intimacy,  
And all at hand, if you look for them.

\*

In the syntax and rhythm of sentences,  
In the page of thought, the intensity of movement,  
The crescendo and decrescendo,  
The trustworthy reader learns the writer's habitude and how to move with it.  
You converse, in a sense, with the voice on the other side of the ink.

The kind of reading is the pleasure of being summoned out of ourselves by the grace,

The ferocity, the skill of the writing before us.  
How else to explain our love of even difficult writers?  
Their agility evokes our agility.  
We move at their speed, elliptically, obliquely,  
However they move.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Richard Martinez:**

In this 21st one hundred year, people become competitive in most way. By being competitive now, people have do something to make them survives, being in the middle of the actual crowded place and notice through surrounding. One thing that occasionally many people have underestimated it for a while is reading. That's why, by reading a e-book your ability to survive raise then having chance to stay than other is high. For you who want to start reading some sort of book, we give you this particular Several Short Sentences About Writing book as basic and daily reading publication. Why, because this book is greater than just a book.

#### **Harold Walsh:**

Precisely why? Because this Several Short Sentences About Writing is an unordinary book that the inside of the e-book waiting for you to snap this but latter it will distress you with the secret it inside. Reading this book close to it was fantastic author who else write the book in such amazing way makes the content interior easier to understand, entertaining technique but still convey the meaning totally. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this anymore or you going to regret it. This excellent book will give you a lot of advantages than the other book get such as help improving your ability and your critical thinking approach. So , still want to hold off having that book? If I have been you I will go to the book store hurriedly.

#### **Lynn Jordan:**

Playing with family in a very park, coming to see the marine world or hanging out with good friends is thing that usually you have done when you have spare time, in that case why you don't try point that really opposite from that. 1 activity that make you not feeling tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you have been ride on and with addition details. Even you love Several Short Sentences About Writing, it is possible to enjoy both. It is great combination right, you still desire to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh can occur its mind hangout fellas. What? Still don't buy it, oh come on its referred to as reading friends.

#### **Jennifer Trojanowski:**

Would you one of the book lovers? If so, do you ever feeling doubt when you find yourself in the book store? Try to pick one book that you never know the inside because don't assess book by its cover may

doesn't work at this point is difficult job because you are frightened that the inside maybe not since fantastic as in the outside appearance likes. Maybe you answer could be Several Short Sentences About Writing why because the fantastic cover that make you consider about the content will not disappoint anyone. The inside or content is usually fantastic as the outside or maybe cover. Your reading 6th sense will directly guide you to pick up this book.

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