Exercises:

* **Look at some literary magazines.** What did you like? What did you not like? Style? Visuals? Name? Goals? Find one litmag you like and subscribe or at least check out their website. Try submitting your work there. Bring in one poem that you think would fit into this magazine and explain why/how it fits in.
* **Poetic Form**. Look through and describe forms by: what they can convey/what they’re good for. Would you try this form? why/why not? Try one form and reflect on the experience.
* **Chapbooks vs full-length books**. Which is better for your work? Maybe just individual poems, no collection? What are your goals in your collection? How does work fit in together? Get a couple poems you’ve written and try to connect them by theme/into a booklet. Bring your poems and give the mini-manuscript a title. Present to group a short synopsis of your work: how they fit together, why they’re important, and why you’re qualified to write these poems. What would the cover look like? How long would you want it to be? Would there be sections? How would it be divided?
* **Narrative** timeline. Pick one point on your life’s timeline that’s super emotionally poignant. Write a freewrite on it. Form this into a poem.
* Look at your **body of work**. What do you often write about? Why? What does this say about what you value and what you’re good at?
* Take one item/place/person in room and **describe**. Start with literal physical descriptions and see where this takes you. How did you interpret objective into something more? What does this say about your writing, and about what you value?
* **Personify** an object or animal or place. Let it plead a case for something: it’s existence, it’s interruption (e.g., a car pleading a case for getting to park in your driveway, etc).
* Write a **eulogy** to something/someone/some place/some time (e..g, Eulogy to my 90s childhood)
* Write an **ode** something/someone/some place/some time (e..g, Ode to my dentist). It can be literal or sarcastic.
* Write about a **loss** or a **gain**. Don’t write about the feeling. Convey the feeling in your writing.
* Group exercise: make up your own **publication**. What would the name be? (e.g., Dinosaur bees) What does this convey about your publications’ values (e.g., value the insane)? What kind of work would you accept and why? Would you be online, print, both? Maybe even try to make it real!
* Write about a **dream**. If you can’t think of a real dream you’ve had, make up a dream and write about that.
* **History**: Write about your parents, weird things that they did. Write about your childhood house as if it were a character. Your past is often some of the best material! Write about an object your mom/dad/sibling valued. That you valued. What happened to that object? Write about your family history, before you were born. Write about a family pet. Write about a place that means a lot to you, in your childhood or now.
* Take one line from a poem you like and use it as a springboard.
* Write instructions to someone or something. Write a poem to a famous person in history, or to someone you’ve never spoken to.
* Write something you love, or something you’re afraid of.
* Write a poem to God. If you don’t believe in God, then write a poem about the absence of God and what that means to you. If you are unsure about God, write a poem to demand God to explain himself to you/to converse with your uncertainty. That, or pretend that you do believe in God and what that would mean. This can be an angry break up letter or an ode or a eulogy to a god you believe is dead, or a psalm of praise, or a song of hurt—anything. But let the poem move. If the poem starts in bitterness, let it end on a note of potential hope. If your poem is praise, let there also be something about the pain and hurt. If your poem is about confusion, throw some possible answers in. Let it not be one sided. Let it be human, but let it also seek answers and truth.
* Write a eulogy to something extinct.
* What are you reading? How has this influenced your writing? Write a poem where you intentionally try to model something about a favorite writer. What did you model? Why does that appeal to you?