



The Perfect Place to Write

Deborah Bosley

IN THEORY, THE PERFECT PLACE to write is wherever you happen to find yourself. I have scribbled in notebooks while swinging in a hammock in the garden, recorded overheard snippets of conversations on the backs of envelopes on trains, and sat on bleak, windswept shingle beaches along the English South Coast with a pocket book and pencil, feeling cold and waiting for great thoughts to descend. Some writers like to create the perfect conditions for writing by flogging off to isolated spots on retreat, but these are all brief interludes. For most of us, the real sustained activity takes place in our homes.

Frequently writers are superstitious creatures and are apt to use a particular notebook, pen or coffee cup like a talisman. For me, I have to write in the same chair in exactly the same spot at the head of the dining table. There are more comfortable chairs and tidier, more serene rooms in which I could write, but the dining table is long and I can scatter the papers and books of my half-completed projects across its surface. A friend once gave me a very elegant ladies writing desk that she had inherited from a well-to-do aunt. It is a thing of beauty, made from walnut with curved legs and lots of useful little compartments. But it was designed for a time when ladies sat down with a crisp sheet of writing paper and little else. Its surface cannot contain the laptop, papers and cups necessary for me to write so it sits unused in a corner of the bedroom.

Behind my chair at the dining table is a glass door and windows which look out onto the garden. Opposite me is a large mirror and in it I can see



the reflection of the entire garden, a broad sweep of green with a mulberry tree in the centre. At the moment its branches are bare but in the coming weeks I will watch it come into bud then leaf. It is a soothing vista with enough to reward a fleeting glance but not so much that it distracts me from the task at hand. If I look up quickly, it's just a blur of restful green. But there are other, more prosaic reasons that this is my optimum spot for writing. It is only fifteen short steps from the kitchen where I go to make the endless cups of coffee which punctuate my day. A great lover of displacement activity, I am also handily placed for putting on a load to wash or to kill a few more minutes wiping down surfaces before my conscience calls me back to the laptop. For all the unpredictability and uncertainty of a writer's life, there isn't a day which passes when I don't feel grateful to be able to work from such a quiet and pretty spot. It truly is perfection.