

Ordinary Things

Finding poetry in the everyday

You don't have to search for something profound. Sometimes the poem is already sitting beside you.

Choose one ordinary object from your life—a coffee cup, an old pair of shoes, a key, a recipe card, a suitcase, a photograph, or something else you have kept without thinking much about why.

FIRST, JUST NOTICE

Describe the object as plainly as you can. Don't try to make it poetic yet. Pay attention to what is actually there.

- What does it look and feel like?
- Is it worn, chipped, faded, folded, scratched or changed with time?
- Where does it usually live?
- Who has touched or used it?
- What small detail would someone else probably overlook?

THEN, ASK THE OBJECT

Now let the object lead you somewhere less expected. Write quickly in response to these questions:

- **Why have I kept this?**
- **What does it know about me?**
- **What has it witnessed?**
- **If it could speak, what might it remind me of?**

LET THE POEM BEGIN

Choose one detail or answer that surprised you. Start there. You might begin with the object itself, a memory it holds, or a sentence you didn't expect to write.

*You might
begin...*

This key no longer opens anything,
but I still know its weight in my hand.

FOLLOW WHAT OPENS

You do not need to explain the object's entire history. Let one image, memory, or feeling be enough. If the poem wanders away from the object, let it. Sometimes an ordinary thing is simply the doorway.

When you finish: Read what you wrote aloud. Underline the line that feels most alive. Then look at the object again. Does it seem different now?

The ordinary is rarely only ordinary.

CREATE. INSPIRE. ENVISION.