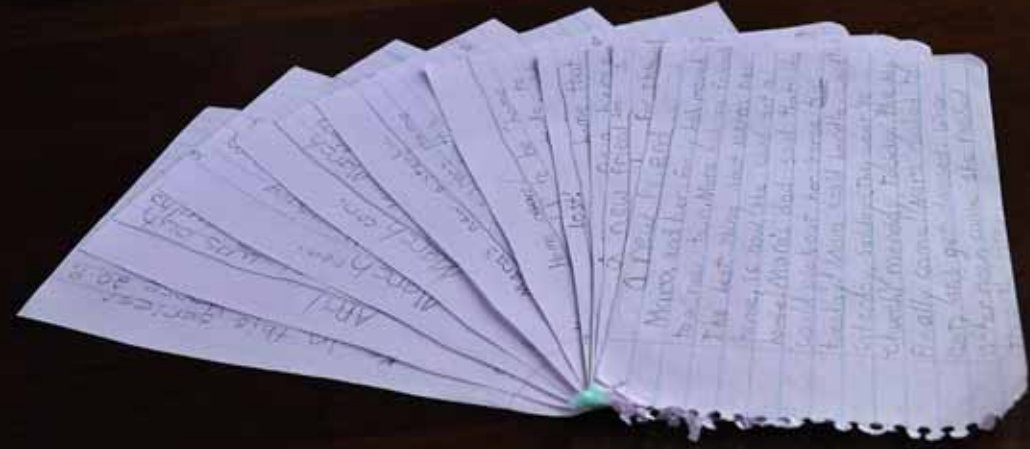


The background features a dark, textured field of small, glowing orange and yellow particles. Overlaid on this are several bright, glowing orange and yellow light trails that form complex, swirling patterns, resembling a nebula or a dynamic energy field. The overall color palette is warm, dominated by oranges, yellows, and reds.

how to make
sharks

a guide to inspiration
by Melissa Gorzelanczyk



Dedicated to Mara, my first character.

Inside a Coleman camping tent with my pencil to purple paper, I wrote my first literary masterpiece: The Black Horse.

I was 9 years old and driven. I was going to be a writer. I didn't know how, but I had an inkling the first step was to write something. So during a sleepover with a neighborhood girl, that's what I did.

An hour and five chapters in, my co-author got bored. "Let's do something else now," she said. She flopped onto

her back and stared at the vinyl ceiling rippling in the wind.

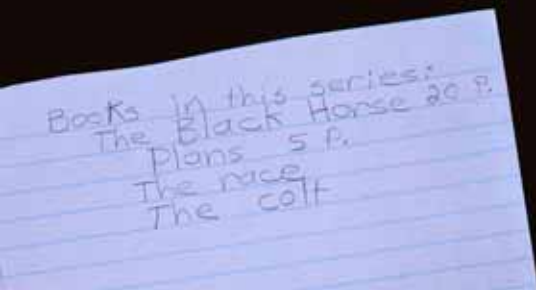
"Come on, write one more chapter with me," I begged.

I was a writer now, and writers write. They don't stop in the middle of muse to do "something else."

This is my first memory of inspiration. It's why I'm passionate about living a life filled with it. To me, inspiration is that magical filler between something else and something amazing. It drives you to write one more chapter.

It makes you believe there are no limits.

It sparks a masterpiece.



How to get **inspired**, now

Some mornings, the words aren't flowing, the workouts never come and the new and improved self never shows her face. Muse can be sexy and flighty at the same time. When you can't wait for muse, put her to work. Use these inspiration hacks to move forward.

1 Just start doing it. Even if you think you can't possibly write anything good, write three sentences. See how you feel now. Get on your running shoes and walk out the door. Dip your brush in the paint.

2 Listen to music. I have Pandora stations that automatically light the spark for writing (for the record, they are: Kings of Leon, Iron and Wine and Yeah Yeah Yeahs). Find yours.

3 Smell her. Lavish your muse with scents to stimulate and refresh, including grapefruit, eucalyptus, lemon and peppermint. Buy them as essential oils or blend them into an inspiration potion with lotion or soap. (www.theredawning.com)

4 Ask a rock. Of course you wouldn't ask a rock. My point is that these are the best places to uncover new

ideas – the places you'd never go. Ask the single girl for ideas about kids. Pick the brain of the receptionist to hear, "You should write about that." These people are genius. You don't have to get fancy. Just ask for ideas like a real person. Say, "What should I write about this week?"

5 Picture, photo, sketch, imagine. Do you have an image that defines the outcome of your hard work? Imagine the outcome daily. How will it feel to write "the end" to your masterpiece? How will it feel to hand in your 2-week notice? Throw the dream floodgates wide open and let the inspiration flow.

6 Go for a drive. I have the best ideas on long car rides. Call your phone and leave a voicemail with the details. Scribble a note at the next stoplight. Pull over and begin.





Creative people make this mistake a lot: we're addicted to each other's work. We're constantly feeding on the latest blog posts, photos, tweets and art shows.

But when we go to begin our own masterpiece, we feel stumped. That great idea sounds like something on so-and-so's blog. We become our own worst critic for work that's not even begun.

My advice: Remove yourself. If you feel stumped, stop reading other blogs for a day. Stop checking out the other jewelry sites on etsy.

Clear the beautiful mental clutter. Because this work is yours. It's your own sexy beast. You have something to say, something to paint, something to fasten together.

If you spend all day watching others wading through the creative stream, you'll be washed up. Cross your own rivers, too. Get to the other side before you're distracted by all the pretty rocks.

Plunge in.

Stir your dreams.





*This year, put off all
but what you find essential
and turn on your life.*

influence

Kindle your life.

You want to be a writer.
Jewelry maker.
Baker.
Something else.
My hope for you is this: If you're
unhappy with life, make it better.
You must. No one else will.
Start today.
Relish your identity as a person,
even if you have lots of other titles.
Be a passionate lover.
Learn something.
Let it go.
Take a break.
Figure out what you stand for and
tell someone that matters.
Hold your head up and move
forward.
Your ideas can change the world.
You can be a hit.
You can start a fire.





look

Nature in the morning.
IN DREAMS.

At the library.
CHRISTMASTIME.
Mexico.

A FARMER'S
MARKET.

At church.

Guzzling water
after a run

At the family dinner table.

OVER A CUP OF STRONG MORNING COFFEE.

The same spot, everyday.
Over dinner with friends.
Somewhere you never wanted to go.



With the laptop open. When you're trying really hard.
Reading about strangers. Sitting by a mountain.

inspiration is all around you

Riding bike along the ocean. during a lecture.

observing a natural disaster. a local café. *Just before bed.*

The front porch at sunset. **WATCHING TV.** With a piece of chalk.
RIDING YOUR BIKE.

Spending time with children. With the laptop closed.

A SNOWSTORM. A bath by candlelight. **DOCTOR'S OFFICE.**

In a room you never sit in. Listening to live fiddle music.

Walking in a field at dusk.

Anthropologie. **RUMMAGE SALES.**
WHEN YOU DRAW.

When playing an instrument.

In the car. *With pen and paper.*

blogs. walking the dog.

While eating fruit.

The airport.

IN THE MORNING.

waiting in a traffic jam.

In the shower.

WHEN YOU'RE MAKING LOVE.





Melissa Gorzelanczyk makes
sparks through her two blogs:

www.peaceandprojects.com
and www.amazingwork.net

Stop by and introduce yourself, lovely.

