

Writer in a coffee shop

I did it. I took my laptop to a nearby coffee shop, ordered an expensive cappuccino, and began writing. But what should I write? The unending, dreadful question.

So, I'm writing about writing to appear busy while I'm having my main character moment. It turns out that there's a lot more to this than I anticipated. There is more to being a creative person than pretentiousness. Is there? Isn't it true that everyone has a creative side?

Not only painters, actors, musicians, and, certainly, authors. Everyone is affected. Carpenters, dog groomers, advertising executives, and even accountants. So, what distinguishes "artists" from the rest of us? Is there even such a thing as a separation? Or is it simply being bold or arrogant enough to call oneself an "artist" or "creative"?

Is it earning a living from one's artistic abilities? That cannot be the case. So many great artists died penniless.

Is it time for me to start writing? Does this count? Is this a superficial attempt to grab for the profound?

I take another drink of my cappuccino, which has a delicate floral design on top. There it is once more. Art. In the hands of a barista.

So, why do so many writers work from coffee shops? Is it the change of scenery? the onlookers? The separation between you and a disruptive partner or family member? Maybe the distance from one's own fridge? Is it the urge to be seen writing? Letting others watch your deed of creating. Does it feel more productive when you're not working in a filthy t-shirt out of your bed?

I am all questions, no answers.

We are an odd species. So full of self-doubt. terrified that our creative output will never amount to anything. We're so eager to be told we're talented. That we have some value. That our efforts will not be forgotten.

I'm almost to the bottom of my mug. The growing dread of not being able to write anything excellent begins to rise. That I'm a sham, a fake, a phoney. Nothing more than a pretender.

I persuade myself that writing something is preferable to writing nothing. It's supposed to comfort and encourage me, but it's not working. I feel it's easier to lie to yourself and believe you'd have been a talented something-or-other if you'd never tried. That way, there's nothing to prove you wrong.

It's the attempting, and facing one's own mediocrity, that cuts the most deeply. Perhaps addressing that and daring to try again is what defines an artist. Perhaps boldness is the secret ingredient in creating anything memorable.

My mug is now empty, and all I have to show for it is this. So be it. I'll give it another shot tomorrow.