

What a Writer Needs: A Significant Subject

Ralph Fletcher

“This cannot be stated bluntly enough: The writer must have something to say. The truth is that all is meaningless unless the writer can find something interesting and important to say about the subject. It doesn’t matter if a writer begins it cleverly or ends it neatly, organizes it smoothly, writes it dramatically, writes it with voice. The “it” itself has to have merit.”

“For me, a significant subject is usually connected, however loosely, to my life. This seems to be true not only for a story or poem idea, but also when I’m seeking a nonfiction subject to write about.”

“Students who find themselves writing dispirited prose on any subject might look harder at themselves and ask: Where do *I* stand on this? What’s *my* point of view? Forget what the experts say: What part amazes or angers me?”