

Stories, Poems, Essays, and Exercises Worth Your While

Juan Martinez

You'll find lots of good stuff to read pretty much everywhere, so this is just a set of stories, poems, and essays I've found particularly helpful, interesting, weird, and worth stealing from.

- Ted Chiang, [The Truth of Fact, the Truth of Feeling](#)
- Aimee Bender, [The Rememberer](#)
- Wells Tower, [Everything Ravaged, Everything Burned](#)
- Kelly Link, [Swans](#)
- George Saunders, [In Persuasion Nation](#), [The Semplica Girl Diaries](#)
- Robert Coover, [Going For a Beer](#)
- Donald Barthelme, [Some of Us Had Been Threatening Our Friend Colby](#)
- Donald Barthelme, [The Baby](#)
- Leonard Michaels, [manikin](#)
- Rebecca Makkai, "Painted Ocean, Painted Ship," [The Briefcase](#), [The Disappearance of Miranda Željko](#), and [Wedding Night](#)
- Alice Munro, [Gravel](#)
- John Cheever, [The Swimmer](#)
- Jack Pendarvis, [Your Cat Can Be a Movie Star!](#)
- Steven Millhouser, [Getting Closer](#)
- Sam Lypsite, [I'm Slaving](#)
- Nathaniel Hawthorne, [Rappaccini's Daughter](#)
- Maria Semple, [Dear Mountain Room Parents](#)
- James Joyce, [The Dead](#)
- Allegra Goodman, [La Vita Nuova](#)

Poems

- Linda France, [Klingon Sestina](#)
- Michael Robbins, [Alien vs. Predator](#)

Essays

- Paul Ford, [Just Like Heaven](#)
- Jack Handey, [What I'd Say to the Martians](#)
- David Foster Wallace, [Consider the Lobster](#)
- Walker Percy, [The Loss of the Creature](#)
- John Jeremiah Sullivan, [Upon this Rock](#), [A Rough Guide to Disney World](#), and [assorted essays](#)
- Gay Talese, [Frank Sinatra Has a Cold](#)

Writers on Writing / Artists on the Creative Process

- [Rebecca Makkai](#)
- [Ira Glass](#)

- [Vladimir Nabokov](#)
- [Deborah Eisenberg](#)
- Constance Hale's [Writing Lessons](#)
- [W.G. Sebald](#)
- [George Saunders on ventriloquism and absurdism](#)
- [Karen Russell](#)
- Antonya Nelson's [Ten Writing Rules](#)

Also, if you're new to college and are looking for novels about people who are also new to college, these are also well worth your while:

- Donna Tartt, *The Secret History*
- Chip Kidd, *The Cheese Monkeys*
- Hugh Kennedy, *Everything Looks Impressive*

Writing Exercises

- Reverse-engineer one of these Alice Munro stories:
<http://the-toast.net/2014/12/08/tell-alice-munro-story/>
- This J. Robert Lennon thing:
<http://static1.squarespace.com/static/50e08e65e4b0c2f4976972df/t/54f88e83e4b0824529c67b98/1425575555095/Mistranslations.pdf>
- From Brian Kiteley: <http://mysite.du.edu/~bkiteley/exercises.html>