Writing Prompts/Transition Language

Writing Prompts:

1. The Variants of Vampires. Think of an alternative vampire that survives on something other than blood. Write a story or scene based on this character.

2. Spinning the Globe. Imagine that a character did the old spin the globe and see where to take your next vacation trick. Write a story or scene describing where they went and how their trip panned out.

3. Misheard Lyrics. Think of some of the song lyrics you have misheard throughout the years. Pick your favorite, and use these misheard lyrics as the title of a new creative writing piece. Write a story, scene, or poem based on this title.

4. I'm Glad You Called. The person whom you or your character has been trying to talk to for ages finally answers the phone. Who is this person? Why were you or your character trying to track them down for so long? How does the phone conversation progress?

5. What's Cooking? As your character watches the hibachi chef prepare their meal, something seems ... off. What is it?

6. Tornado Season. A tornado is forming and your character is in the absolute worst place they can be at the moment. Where are they? How do they handle the situation?

7. School Daze. Your character's child comes home with a detention slip to sign, but your character isn't angry. What's the reason that they aren't angry with their child for getting into trouble at school?

8. Awkward Prom Date. Your character's prom date went ... not so well. Why?

9. Museum Artifacts. Take a look around a museum or recall your favorite pieces in a museum. Imagine what the past lives of these artifacts look like. Alternatively, you may imagine what the everyday objects in our lives might look like in a museum and what stories future generations will tell about them.

10. Thrift Store Finds. Take a trip to the thrift store or think about your latest trip. Pick one item you find interesting and imagine who its past owner(s) was. How did they use the item? Why did they end up donating it to the thrift store?

11. What In The World? Your character's day has been every sort of strange that you can imagine. Write about this day from their perspective—in the voice of a children's book.

12. If You Look Back Far Enough, You Can See ... Complete the sentence "If you look back far enough, you can see ..." and write a scene or short story that contains the line.

13. No One Can See Me. Re-write a scene or story from the point of view of someone or something that none of the characters knew was watching. It could be a ghost, animal, the furniture come to life, etc.

14. Firecracker Justification. Take the words firecracker, sad, antacid, 72, and courtroom. Or, pick five random words of your own. Write a scene or story that includes all of the words.

15. Heat Wave. It keeps getting hotter, and things are also getting weirder. Write a scene or story that describes the strange things happening the hotter it gets.

16. It's My Story and I'll Pitch if I Want To. Imagine that you are a character from a classic tale pitching your memoir to a literary agent. You know that it will become the next bestseller. Write your query letter, story synopsis, or elevator pitch to the agent.

17. Creating the Character. Begin a new story by creating a character. What do they look like? How do they dress? Is there anything unusual about their appearance? Write a scene or story exploring your new character.

18. So I've Heard ... Write a story or scene that includes "sound words" that set the scene.

19. Abecedarian. Write a story, scene, or poem that uses the abecedarian format. Start with the letter A or get creative and start anywhere in the alphabet you wish.

20. Apocalypse Now. Write a story or scene set during an apocalypse.

Transition Phrases:

THAT SIGNAL TIME

At the same time
Afterwards
For two weeks
Meanwhile
At night
For a month he did not visit, see, plan, etc.
In the morning
After lunch
The next day
Later that evening
When the sun sank
The following Tuesday
A week later
Months passed
At the appointed time
The next time they met
When they arrived home
As they approached
In the year 2004
It took a month, but
On the first sunny day

THAT SHIFT LOCATION

They boarded the plane, train, bus, etc.
The hotel was
She walked alone into the dark streets
When the train stopped
She took a position in
The cabin was situated
Farther along Barnett Street
The taxi inched through traffic
They sat hunched on the steps of the
Across from the temple
When they reached
In the hospital corridor

THAT CHANGE POINT OF VIEW

In spite of his father's warning, Joseph carried the...
Although Alexa was twenty-eight when her father died...
When Samantha woke...
In reality, Jason's car was old, and black and hot inside
Regardless of the heat, he had waited in line three hours for tickets
To celebrate, Maxine purchased a bottle of...
Despite his need to see her again, he would leave in the morning
When the time came, Thomas met his guests in the hallway
On the whole, Alice enjoyed being alone
As usual, Jackson was late. He rushed...
Later, they sat at a small table in the corner, and Eliza ...
Because they had no future, she...
Robert had a restless night
Geneva sometimes wondered why…

THAT ALTER THE PACE

Not daring to look back, she ran toward the lights (quickens the pace)
To avoid them, he shuffled from room to room (slows)
"Under the new rules," he drawled (slows)
"You silly fool," he whispered. "Do you want to get us killed?" (quickens)
He pushed to the front of the crowd to see (quickens)
As a consequence, the weight of the news bore down on him (slows)
"We have hours to wait," she said (slows)
With languid ease, Blanche rolled over (slows)
Peter ducked behind the wall and held his breath (quickens)