

English 2110: Sladky

### The Imaginary Box

**Free associate:** Place an imaginary box on the table in front of you. Begin to remove items from the box and list them on a sheet of paper, in whatever degree of detail seems appropriate. Quit after you have completed one page or after five minutes, or continue if things keep coming out of the box.

Pull things from the box at random. Abandon logic and let your subconscious mind guide you, that is, don't "think." Don't expect or look *for* anything, just grab and pull whatever appears in your hand.

When you finish, re-read your list and ask the questions listed below. Write notes on a separate page as you respond to the questions. Remember, this is a *freewrite* governed by *free association*, not by planned or logical thought. By question (4), make additions and try to create a new or expanded list. Follow the objects; go wherever they may take you, leading to whatever the material seems to suggest. Remember, you are practicing *invention* by free-associating to generate material by bringing unconscious thoughts to the surface.

A. Look back over your list and answer the following questions, writing any ideas that come to mind.

1. Which things on the list seem to go together? In what way?
  - a. By subject? Attitude? Person? Event? Other? What is it that links or *might link* them?
2. Is there any sequence on your list that suggests movement of any kind? Such as movement from one *thing* to another, one *action* to another, one *attitude* to another, etc?
3. Are there any titles that point toward what the list seems to be suggesting? Try to list several.

B. Decide which title seems to fit the best, then ask the following questions:

4. Do any items on the list *repeat* each other?
  - a. Could any items on the list be removed? Do any items seem not to fit?
5. Are there any items that can be added to complete the felt idea? \*\*\*
  - a. What patterns do you recognize? Do things seem to fit in groups? Are things or groups of things opposed or in contrast to each other?
  - b. Generate new material that seems to "belong" to ideas the material is suggesting.
    - i. Try to identify new patterns that seem to be emerging.
    - j. Start *a new list* that evolves from the most interesting pattern(s) you've identified.
6. Are any items moving toward something else the list seems to be suggesting? Identify and pursue!
  - a. If not, how could you differently arrange or group things on the list?
  - b. Do you recognize or can you create repetitions that seem to suggest something?
7. Welcome to the world of writing poetry!