

How to Beat Writer's Block

March 21, 2016

The New Yorker:

In 1920, a sixteen-year-old Graham Greene decided that, after “104 weeks of monotony, humiliation, and mental pain,” he could no longer remain at Berkhamsted, the prep school where he was enrolled. He fled, leaving behind a note of resignation for his parents—his father was the school’s headmaster—, and was discovered on the heath soon after. The escape proved so troubling to his family that it led to a six-month stint in psychotherapy. It was a fortuitous turn in Greene’s life. He got a break from the school he dreaded and acquired a habit that would prove crucial to his life as a writer: Greene began keeping a dream journal, to help him channel his mental distress in a more productive direction.

...

That, in the end, seems to be the main message of research into writer’s block: It’s useful to escape from external and internal judgment—by writing, for instance, in a dream diary, which you know will never be read—even if it’s only for a brief period. Such escapes allow writers to find comfort in the face of uncertainty; they give writers’ minds the freedom to imagine, even if the things they imagine seem ludicrous, unimportant, and unrelated to any writing project.

Read the whole story: [The New Yorker](#)