

# Amelinda Bérubé

*The Dark Beneath the Ice*

*Here There Are Monsters*



...and coming 2024:

*The Ones Who Come Back Hungry*

Twitter, Instagram, TikTok:

@metuiteme

## Sound relatable???



## Otherwise known as...

- I want to write, but I can't!
- I just don't feel like writing.
- I don't have any ideas.
- I'm waiting for inspiration.
- I don't know how to start this story.
- I'm stuck on this story.
- I can't write until I finish my homework/walk the dog/wash the kitchen floor -- oh look the day is over.

Laurie Halse Anderson says this always boils down to one of two things:

BURNOUT

or

FEAR

# REFILLING THE WELL

You don't have to wait for ideas to come to you!

Read

- any non-fiction that sounds interesting
- weird stuff on the internet (Atlas Obscura)
- fanfiction

Listen to music

Watch movies

Get out and do/see stuff

- check out some art or poetry
- go to new places
- try new things

Daydream and give your brain space to percolate

\*\*\*Keep a notebook or  
bookmark websites so you  
can find them later\*\*\*

...this is not the way.

Then Toad began  
to bang his head  
against the wall.



"Why are you banging your head  
against the wall?" asked Frog.

"I hope that if I bang my head  
against the wall hard enough,  
it will help me to think of a story,"  
said Toad.



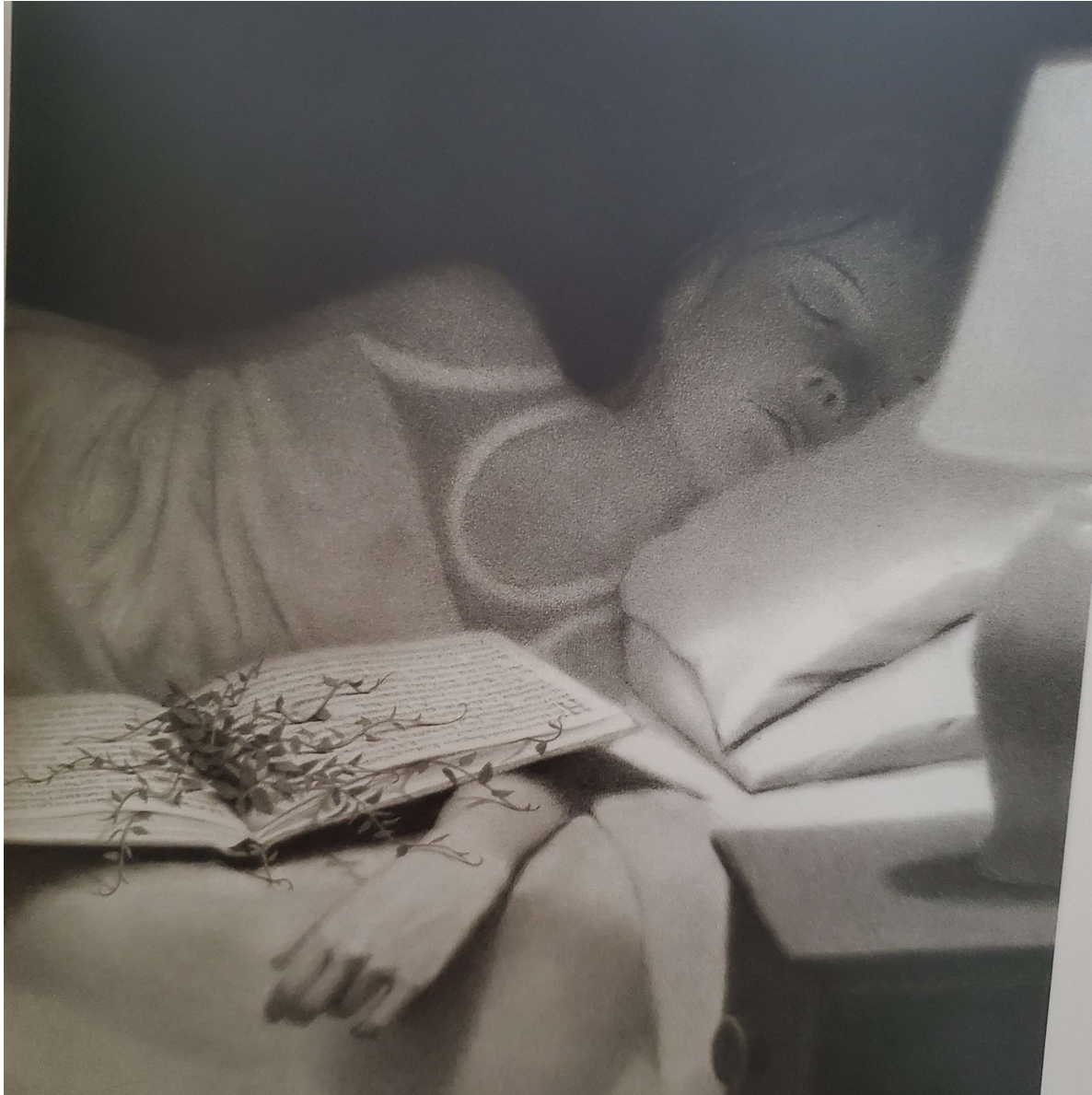
# The Great New England Vampire Panic

Two hundred years after the Salem witch trials, farmers became convinced that their relatives were returning from the grave to feed on the living

Abigail Tucker

October 2012

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“He had warned her about the book.  
Now it was too late...”

From *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*

## BRAINSTORMING METHODS TO TRY...

Make a list of 30 things that fascinate you (YES 30)

Make a list of 30 things that scare you

Make a list of possible settings

Mix and match fascinations/fears and settings

“zombies” + “shopping mall”

“black holes” + “library”

Use a line from a favourite poem as a writing prompt

Use tarot cards as a writing prompt

What was the last thing that made you REALLY MAD?

What's the worst possible thing that could happen to your character?

Take a couple of characters who absolutely HATE each other...and then make them work together or get them stuck together in a small space



FEAR

“Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa this is hard!”

YES IT IS.

“What if this upsets someone?”

“What if someone hates this?”

# “What if it’s not good enough?”

Often disguised as...

Revising the opening a million times instead of moving forward

Starting 20 things and never finishing any of them

Getting lost in endless worldbuilding, outlining, or research (vs. actually writing)

Waiting for inspiration

Mr Earbrass has been rashly skimming through the early chapters, which he has not looked at for months, and now sees *TUH* for what it is. Dreadful, *dreadful*, DREADFUL. He must be mad to go on enduring the unexquisite agony of writing when it all turns out drivel. Mad. Why didn't he become a spy? How does one become one? He will burn the MS. Why is there no fire? Why aren't there the makings of one? How did he get in the unused room on the third floor?



# Steps of the Creative Process

1. This is AWESOME
2. This is trickier than I thought
3. This is HOT GARBAGE
4. I AM HOT GARBAGE
5. This is better than I thought
6. This is AWESOME

# Tricks for working with (despite) fear

- Write by hand or in a goofy font (e.g. *comic sans* )
- Make your window really small so you can only see a sentence or two at a time (so you're not tempted to reread obsessively)
- Write the good parts first and then stitch them together
- Write in small, regular bites
- Bribe yourself
- Set a schedule that works for you

- Find a representation for your brain weasels



# IMPORTANT NOTE

There is a difference between FEAR and PANIC.

Other things that can block you:

Anxiety

Depression

ADHD

Treating them will NOT make your writing suffer, I promise!!!



These slides will be posted at [www.metuiteme.com](http://www.metuiteme.com) later this afternoon!

**Cool media mentioned in this presentation:**

*Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson

[www.atlasobscura.com](http://www.atlasobscura.com) (they're on many social media)

Instagram: @allabandoned

For weird news, google "Florida man"

Vampire panic article: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-great-new-england-vampire-panic-36482878/>

For fanfiction: Archive of Our Own [www.ao3.com](http://www.ao3.com)

<https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/browse.php>

*The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* by Chris Van Allsburg

*Everybody's Gone to the Rapture* original soundtrack by Jessica Curry (on Spotify & YouTube)

Medusa with the Head of Perseus – sculpture by Luciano Garbati

"The Unstrung Harp; or, Mr. Earbrass Writes a Novel" by Edward Gorey (easiest to find in a collection called *Amphigorey*)

**\*\*\*Some of the websites above can be REAL RABBIT HOLES – good for writing, bad for getting anything else done – so use with caution!**