POETRY “BIBLE”

1. Stingy with information
   1. Be generous with your information
   2. Be in a specific and superbly interesting location and actual time
   3. Be more focused on what you sense and observe rather than writing ‘states’ (I think, I feel happy, I want, I am happy, etc.)
   4. Write from the real world
2. Failure to progress
   1. Each line is a mini poem
   2. Trust the reader’s ability to understand and connect
   3. Trust your leaps
   4. Lean into your weirdness
   5. Embrace surprise
   6. Let the poem guide you
3. “Poemy” words
   1. Create a list of personal “go to” poemy words and refuse to use them
   2. Collect excellent non-designated poem words and use them
4. No subtext
   1. Poems should always be about two things: one is the action (what is happening on the page) while the other is feeling (the implied thing that is happening on the page).
5. No paying attention to line length/counting syllables
   1. Understand the power of containment
   2. This is why form can be helpful; it forces you into places you weren’t going to go
   3. Use enjambment! Try writing in sentences and breaking where you feel appropriate.
6. Stakes aren’t high enough
   1. There is an eerie ethereal you.
   2. There are small things in your life (whether they have happened to you or that you have observed) that are big things – your work as an artist has so much to do with subject choice.
   3. Pick the very best things to write about in the very best way. Everything in the world has already been written about; you have to find a way to make that new, to make it interesting.

When reading poems, think about what is at stake. Think about topics that inspire you. What are your go to subjects and what’s weak in these choices?

Try to self-apply these comments to all of your poems.