

So You Want to Be a Writer

*if it doesn't come bursting out of you
in spite of everything,
don't do it.*

*unless it comes unmasked out of your
heart and your mind and your mouth
and your gut,
don't do it.*

*if you have to sit for hours
staring at your computer screen
or hunched over your typewriter
searching for words,
don't do it.*

*if you're doing it for money or fame,
don't do it.*

*if you're doing it because you want
women in your bed,
don't do it.*

*if you have to sit there and
rewrite it again and again,
don't do it.*

*if it's hard work just thinking about doing it,
don't do it.*

*if you're trying to write like somebody else,
forget about it.*

*if you have to wait for it to roar out of you,
then wait patiently.*

*if it never does roar out of you,
do something else.*

*if you first have to read it to your wife
or your girlfriend or your boyfriend
or your parents or to anybody at all,
you're not ready.*

*don't be like so many writers,
don't be like so many thousands of people
who call themselves writers,
don't be dull and boring and*

*pretentious,
don't be consumed with self-love.
the libraries of the world
have yawned themselves to sleep
over your kind.
don't add to that.
don't do it.
unless it comes out of
your soul like a rocket,
unless being still
would drive you to madness or
suicide or murder,
don't do it.
unless the sun inside you is
burning your gut,
don't do it.*

*when it is truly time,
and if you have been chosen,
it will do it by itself
and it will keep on doing it
until you die or it dies in you.*

*there is no other way.
and there never was.*

-- Charles Bukowski