

The Lighter View

by Rebecca J Merck

Trivierata

Go placidly amid the nouns and verbs, and remember what peace there may be in punctuation. As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with your copyeditor and proofreader. Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even to the harsh and pedantic; they too have their shelves of reference books. Avoid grammarless persons and those with small vocabularies; they are vexations to the spirit. If you compare your writing with others, you may become vain or bitter, for always there will be those who have been more often published than you, and those who should not even be able to obtain printing at a vanity press. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career; however humble, it's a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution in copyrights, for the world is full of plagiarism. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons quote you as praise, and everywhere life is full of proper citations. Be yourself. Especially do not feign the style of classic authors. Neither be cynical about your talent; for

even in the face of nothing but rejection letters, it is as perennial as the grass. Take kindly the counsel of your customer, gracefully surrendering in favor of the paycheck. Nurture strength of spirit (and savings account) to shield you in sudden layoffs. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness. Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a writer in this universe no less than those on the *New York Times* Bestseller List and the authors represented in the Everyman's Library series; you have a right to your scribbling. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with your muse, whatever you conceive her to be. And whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul. With all its typos, empty printer cartridges, and inkstains, it is still a beautiful career. Be cheerful. Strive to be prolific.

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