1. WRITING FROM PHOTOGRAPHS AND PICTURES. “Part of writing is trying to describe the pictures we see in our minds, so it is logical to practice that skill by looking at real photographs and artists’ renderings . . . choose a painting or drawing that interests you, that has an element of mystery or tension, or a strong emotional atmosphere. Put yourself into the picture you have chosen and observe what goes on there. Make the people in the picture come to life. You may want to have one of them serve as the narrator as you tell their story – how they got there, or where they are going. When Stephen Sondheim tried this with a painting by Georges Seurat, the result was his award-winning musical, ‘Sunday in the Park With George.’” (Joselow, Beth Baruch. Writing Without the Muse. 51)

2. Everyone in your writing group should write a topic on a scrap of paper. List a topic like “swimming” or “your first sexual experience.” (Goldberg, Natalie. Writing Down the Bones. 150-153). Place all the papers in a pile and everyone selects one. Agree to meet up in an hour or so to share. Everyone disperses to write – some of you may want to find an artwork that inspires or represents your topic – you can describe it or create a story around it or explain why it represents your topic.

3. BE HERE RIGHT NOW. Practice writing about place to describe where you are right now. Use your senses as much as possible, describe what you see, hear, smell, feel, and taste. Go to a variety of locations in the museum, to a variety of artworks, and “sketch” in words what you see, hear, smell, feel, and taste. Try works very familiar to you and new works of art. (Newman, Leslea. Writing from the Heart. 45-46).

4. TIMED WRITING. Find a work of art that interests all of you and set up a schedule of timed writing. Decide that you will write for 10 minutes. Stop. Write for another 10 or 20 minutes. Stop. Share without comments. Write for another amount of time, and so on. (Goldberg, Natalie. Writing Down the Bones. 150-153).

5. DEAR DIARY. Find artwork with people in it. Write a diary or journal entry in a character’s voice. In this circumstance, your character is not addressing anyone in particular, she is recording her thoughts and feelings on paper, most likely her most private thoughts and feelings, things she wouldn’t tell another living soul. Do this even if this character is not the type of person who would write in a diary or journal. (Newman, Leslea. Writing from the Heart. 115-116).