

a rule, though, you are allowed plenty of time; no editor wants hasty, jumbled or hurried work.

Which brings me to another rule—rather, two rules which go together. The first is (and if it's a quotation its sources are multiple): You have not learned to write until you have learned to rewrite. And the second one is that the editor, like a department store's customer, is always right. And he is right. Your purpose is to write a story that the readers of the magazine he edits will like. If that had not been your purpose you wouldn't have submitted that story to that magazine. Very well, then; it is the editor's business to choose stories that his readers like; he must know how to do so or his magazine would not be solvent. And if his magazine were not solvent you wouldn't be submitting your story to that magazine. Well, then.

And I want to be clearly understood: an editor's criticism is likely to be very valuable; if you follow it you are profiting by seasoned and experienced advice, and you yourself are definitely gaining by it. It's natural, of course, to feel a kind of inward fury if faced with a task of rewriting but this is a kind of nervous reaction only; forget it and do the work and thank your stars for the criticism.

This has been written altogether for the beginner; for one who aims at becoming a professional writer, and for one who desires to or must support himself and his family by means of two hands and a typewriter. All a writer can do, in writing a piece that aims at advice, is to draw upon the precepts he's learned from his own experience. His own experience, that is, thus far. I ought to underline "thus far." For every day you write adds that much more experience. It rests altogether with the writer himself what use he makes of that experience. Both good fortune and bad fortune have their dangers; the whole question is how will you be affected by either?

And if any beginning writers reach this point I want to tell them that everyone must begin some time and that if the roads were named there would in all likelihood be Trial and Error Road, Hard Work Road, Disappointment and Resilience Cross Roads (where you have to be sure to make the right turn), and Tenacity (also called Take-a-Lesson-by-Experience) Hill Road. So you're off, and good luck to you, and though you may get a little winded now and then you're pretty sure to like the journey.