**Diana Goesch: The Inner, Outer and Secret Practices**

* + - **Outer:** Making the time regularly to write. Sit down and write.
    - **Inner:** Knowing what to do when writing: freewriting strategies. Write, write, write.
    - **Secret:** Being open to surprise, maintaining a negative capability, following the golden thread until a door opens to the second subject.

**William Stafford and the Golden Thread.**

*from Robert Bly’s introduction to Stafford’s Selected Poems*

One of [Stafford’s] most amazing gifts to poetry is his theme of the golden thread. He believes that whenever you set a detail down in language, it becomes the end of a thread ... and every detail - the sound of the lawn mower, the memory of your father's hands, a crack you once heard in lake ice, the jogger hurtling herself past your window - will lead you to amazing riches.

William Blake said,   
  
I give you the end of a golden string,

Only wind it into a ball

It will lead you in at Heaven's gate

Built in Jerusalem's wall

I asked Stafford one day, "Do you believe that every golden thread will lead us through Jerusalem's wall, or do you love particular threads? " He replied, "No, every thread." In "Views on the Author's Vocation" (1978), he said, "Any little impulse is accepted, and enhanced.... The stance to take, reading or writing, is neutral, ready, susceptible to now.... Only the golden string knows where it is going, and the role for a writer or reader is one of following, not imposing."

Stafford remarked, however, that "purposeful writers" may pull too hard. One has to be careful not to break the thread.

**John Keats’ Negative Capability** is a writer's ability, “which Shakespeare possessed so enormously,” to accept “uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.”