

Writer's Block

Just a block? Why not turn it into a whole neighborhood?
Give it a little bodega so you can always have fresh oranges while you're not writing
and a bookstore with a cat who sleeps on the notebook you need.
Don't forget to add a laundromat and a pizza parlor
and, of course, a bike shop
for pedaling far, far away from your second draft.

Once it's a neighborhood, you might as well make it a city.
You see, a city has a mayor
and a mayor can issue decrees like, *no writing until the dishes are done*
or ask that citizens shut off their computers by 2 pm each day to conserve energy.
A city has parades, too.
There's a great one in June commemorating the time you did the bare minimum.
I heard your mother will be making a speech.
With all that confetti and excitement
who can blame you for screening your agent's call?
Doesn't she know the roads are closed today?
The children are out of school,
the fireworks beginning as we speak.

Frankly, this place is starting to sound like a nation
and if there's one thing a nation has, it's pride.
You'll need a flag and a slogan, a constitution, a mascot.
May I suggest *Quitters Never Prosper*
under the emblem of a squirrel waiting to cross the road?
It's up to you, of course, seeing as you are the president.
Of course you are!
Someone has to decide who we go to war with
and how we tax our citizens
and whether people can have abortions
and who can come into the country and who should be kicked out
and if people can have guns and if the turkey should be pardoned
and what we should do about the environment,
all of which,
you'll be delighted to learn,
will render you far too busy to write.

But, wait a minute! You say. You don't want to run a country!
You just want to be back on your block,
that little corner of the world where you know everyone
and everyone knows you.
Where the kids next door shoot hoops in the street
and Mrs. Romano leaves leftovers at your door
because you remind her of her son, the artist,
who says he'll never paint again
but does.