



This writing prompt was developed in conjunction with Lightbox interviews with [C. Dale Young](#) and [Emilia Phillips](#). For more information, please see www.lightboxpoetry.com.

Writing Prompt:

In her interview, Emilia Phillips writes about her practice of collecting strange, unusual objects: “It’s here where mystery exists, where the poem exists. I keep my cabinet of curiosity not for knowing but to indulge in unknowing.” In this prompt, we’ll ask you to explore a mysterious object of your own.

To begin, create a small *Wunderkammer*, or cabinet of curiosities. You might collect weird photographs, and other ephemera; strange charts or graphs that seem odd or inexplicable; medical illustrations or bizarre vintage advertisements; outmoded technologies; things people used to use in their everyday lives, but no longer do. You can do this with physical objects or by creating a digital cabinet online. If you’ve completed our related activity, “Getting Lost in the Wunderkammer,” you may already have some of these objects at your disposal.

Choose one particularly intriguing object in your collection, one that seems to suggest interesting possibilities, but remains mysterious to you in some way. You might start your writing by making observations or guesses about the object in language, but the purpose of your writing should be to allow yourself to wander into strange territories, to create an imagined world where this object could exist. Follow a line of inquiry into this new territory; see how far away from the initial object your poem can lead you.