



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](http://www.lightboxpoetry.com).

### **Writing Prompt (courtesy of Emilia Phillips):**

Let's do a prompt based on my poem "[Supine Body in Full-Length Mirror, Hotel Room, Upper West Side,](#)" which originally appeared in *New England Review* and will be out with *Groundspeed* in March 2016.

Prompt:

1. Stand in front of a mirror and study yourself for at least two minutes. Try to notice every detail you possibly can.
2. Now go to the paper and spend three minutes writing down every detail you remember about yourself. Try to be as objective (non-judgmental) as possible; think of yourself as a neutral object that you're describing. Use only specific, concrete, and literal details. (No figurative language: metaphors, similes, etc.)
3. For three minutes, revise your description by removing details that aren't as significant to your description. Ask yourself: What details reveal more than their existence. (Examples: The scar on my face suggests violence, injury, or surgery. A tattoo might reveal what you value. A bruise might hint at a narrative.)
4. For the next ten minutes, rewrite your description in a form that alludes to your understanding or feeling about your body. Perhaps you have broken syntax because you feel injured in some way. Long lines because, like Whitman, you feel as if you extend beyond your bodily bounds. Couplets because there's someone who you feel completes your body. Rhyming quatrains because you feel formal and stately. Be as true to your form as possible.
5. If you have time, repeat step 4, but this time use an utterly different form. Share the poems, and discuss how the two forms change or alter the poem.

If you like this exercise, you might enjoy the exercises and prompts that I post frequently on my blog [Ears Roaring with Many Things: On Writing & Teaching Creative Writing](#).