# Tataiako

* Begin by sharing yourself – however you feel comfortable – not creepy, not deepest secrets but lots to allow them in
* mihi but people have heard it so I’ll use examples from my own writing as I go.
* Validating their experience, response to prompts, at draft point looking for what’s good and a way forward

# Overview Slide

# Beginnings

* **Start low stakes**, shared activity – build something together – get trust working so they know what they’re doing with each other.
* Class has to be a **welcoming** environment for writers.
* We’re all **scared** of things (me phys ed in 3rd form) but as teachers its easy to only show the kids what we already know. Making ourselves vulnerable is difficult. And I suspect that I’m not the only one here who finds sharing writing scary.
* So that feeling is what you want to remember and help students overcome.
* Have a **variety** of starters and be ready to ditch one if it’s not working – you don’t have to say this isn’t working – just move on quickly to the next. One strategy once they’ve started working on their own – new starter every 5 mins for a period – can ignore them as soon as one takes flight.

**Show don’t tell**

1st Establish – through examples, through exercises – what show don’t tell means. Easy to say, hard to know what it looks like on the page.

* No abstractions
* No judgement adjectives
* I love – icecream, my house, my mother, shopping
* I hate – sour cream, haters, Donald Trump (*Eating sour cream is like when you have bronchitis and cough in public: slimy phlegm caught in your mouth that you can’t spit out, so it slides, rancid, down your throat.)*
* Or – shared words with different meanings – I loved that film, I hated that food, essay, contrast

Image and sense detail – the function of these is to move something from the writer’s mind to the understanding of others.

## Hastings

Trapped birds singing in an aluminium cage. Another one defrosting on the bench. The lawn mower circles the house like it’s closing in on something. Hold a hand over an ear as you take the plastic shroud to the bin.

The drive-by shout-outs of stereos, window-down grunted headnods from cars hunched over their wheels as they jolt over judder bars. The drunk crying in the broken car, a facsimile of reality beamed through our screens. Gut-song, object lesson, word of advice. Here’s the failure of the landscape, the gouged tree and darkmarked place of leaving paths. Here’s the sign of warning.

One cloud vacillates in the bruised sky. Raised expectations and defences, two-toned garages behind steel gates, head-height palisades with agapanthus softening the blow. The neighbour cycling an eternal round-the-block. Piebald hedges, hope-messaged mailboxes and door panels. Childsafe chocolate, mothers at the end of the drive. Daylight’s been saved so evening’s still waiting around the corner. It’s past time for gin. Stay – I’ll pour you one. Stick around and see the fall.

# Low stakes starters

* One sentence or phrase each – check with neighbour if you want (NO coercion at this point, remember making them feel safe)
* This kind of thing can move into great starters for longer pieces (Joe Brainard, My mother is standing, History by Tomaz). It’s not the starter itself but what it triggers.
* On strips of paper, blue tack. Can just add them then read out. Prison poem. Power of a title.
* Could vary – First four put in horizontal row. Next four choose which one to add to. Next four can change order, move things around, add own.
* Results from prison

# An Ordinary Guy

I am a warrior from a long line of chiefs.

I am the type to listen before you speak.

I am the person in Cell 55.

I am the person in the front of the class thinking

how did I come to stand here?

I am the person who is lost in the moment.

I am a man leading my soldiers to war.

I am an artist. My body is my canvas.

I am an alien in a foreign country.

I am the fulla with the scar on my face.

I am an ordinary type of guy.

# Sense detail.

Pottles with sunscreen, cleaner

Sensory box

Figs

# Figs brainstorm

# The fig

# Displacement

making characters feel what you do – a safe way to express feeling

# Bird in a Cage

Bright light announces the beginning of my day

drapes pulled back, night turns to day, & comes the urge to sing.

Shattered seed shells scattered on the floor

obscure yesterday’s stories,

which, in black and white, speak of things great and small -

now they are the ground upon which I walk.

My windows hold no glass, just metal bars

The views on offer wounds and scars.

The days are shapeless devoid of change

I hear no shackles but yet I’m chained.

From deep inside there comes a voice

that whispers of a life of choice.

A life it says I once knew, before the shop, the box then you.

But life is now & here I be, perched upon my swing I sing

My wings no longer know how to fly

and with disuse I atrophy.

Romeo and Juliet Variation: See what a scourge is laid upon your hate

# Act VI (Romeo and Juliet Variation)

Capulet was the last to die.

Montague hung on for a while, a growth

round and vital as a baby in his gut.

By the end it pressed on his breath

until every exhalation was a strangled call

for his long gone son –

oh, oh, oh.

Capulet grew too,

till his heart was so lost in flesh

no one could hear it beat. The crevasses

in the fat-stretched skin stank of corruption.

His feet wept pus and his thighs were raw

from urine, leaked from the powerless penis

hidden in his corpulence, his body finishing what

the contempt of his young wife had begun.

He lay where he fell for three hours before the servants

thought to look. They found him on the balcony

above the orchard. God knows what he was doing there:

it’d been years since he’d been outside. It took three men to lift him

to the nearest bed. From then he had no speech,

no movement. He lay cast on pillows,

dribbling at both ends and mouthing

what could have been obscenities

or prayers. Then, one morning

as nightingales gave way to larks, he gasped out

one opaque word and choked

his way to eternal judgement.

They had to knock down a wall to get his body out.

# Reflect

Own practice – write down an idea you might use/three things to take away

Evaluation sheet.