

MAGNOLIA & OPAL

The First Five Days

Five days of writing for the week
after you lose the job.

M | O

I was laid off after eleven and a half years. I wrote these because I needed them and couldn't find them.

Five pages. Ten minutes each. You don't have to do them in order and you don't have to do them on consecutive days.

Nobody reads this but you. Write the version you wouldn't say out loud.

If a page is too much today, close it. It'll be here.

Meredith

Name it

Circle every one that's true.

relieved · humiliated · furious · numb · ashamed · scared

betrayed · exhausted · blank · restless · calm · guilty

grieving · free · small · invisible · angry at them

angry at myself · embarrassed to admit any of this

Where do you feel it in your body?

Now pick the loudest one and write about that one. Ten minutes.

Put the pen down. You don't have to solve it today.

The sentence you told yourself

In the first hour after you found out, you told yourself something about what it meant. Write it down in the words you actually used.

What's the evidence it's true?

What's the evidence it isn't?

How many people went. Whether it was your whole department. Whether anyone said one word about your work. What the last twelve months actually looked like.

Now write the version a fair witness would write.

You don't have to believe the new sentence yet. Write it anyway.

Who you are without the title

Three things you're good at that had nothing to do with that job.

Something someone thanked you for in the last year that wasn't in your job description.

Who are you when you're not your job title?

The job was where you did the work. It was never the work.

One small thing

Not the job search. The house. One thing small enough to finish this week.

Name one thing in your house you've been walking past.

The drawer that sticks. The room you stopped going into. The box from the last move.
The thing you apologize for when someone comes over.

What would it actually take?

Time _____ Money _____ One trip _____

Not the whole renovation. Just this.

When this week? Day and time. Not "sometime."

Day _____ Time _____

How you feel right now, 1 to 10: _____

Same scale, after you've done it: _____

This is not a distraction from putting your life back together. It's how it gets done.

A year from now

It's a year from today. The year went about as well as it reasonably could have.

Write the morning.

Where are you. What's the first thing you do. What's different about the house. What are you not worried about anymore.

What's one thing in that paragraph that's already partly true?

One thing you'll do in the next two days.

By when _____

Write the date down. That's the part that makes it real.

You did five days of this. That's more than most people manage in the month after.

Nothing is fixed. That was never the offer. But you've named it, you've checked the story you built out of it, and you've done one thing to your house that wasn't there before.

I'm rebuilding a 1959 house and a career at the same time, in public, so you can see what the work actually looks like.

magnoliaandopal.com

This is a journal, not therapy, and I'm not a therapist. If you're carrying more than you can hold, talk to someone. In the US, call or text 988, any time.
