

DEFINITION OF SCAVENGE

TO COLLECT USABLE THINGS FROM WHAT HAS BEEN DISCARDED

WELCOME TO YOUR POCKET SCAVENGER CLASSROOM PACKET!

INSIDE YOU'LL FIND:

- A LETTER TO STUDENTS FROM AUTHOR KERI SMITH
- SAMPLE PROMPTS FROM POCKET SCAVENGER
- CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
- SUGGESTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES
- AN INTERVIEW WITH KERI SMITH

AND MORE!

DEAR FELLOW SCAVENGERS:

In the following pages, I'm going to ask you to search for one or more items. At first glance, these may seem like simple, mundane, inconsequential things, but don't be fooled—they are of utmost importance!

There are hundreds (or thousands) of things around us that we don't notice. We tune them out because they don't seem important for our current needs. But what if we look at every "thing" as if we have never seen it before? As if we do not know its function? In that way, we learn to see it with new eyes.

Most of us have participated in scavenger hunts at some point in our lives: running around a location frantically looking for items on a list, locating the objects before someone else does, finding everything as fast as possible. With the scavenges in these pages, we are going to take the act of scavenging into a slightly different realm by first collecting objects and then altering them.

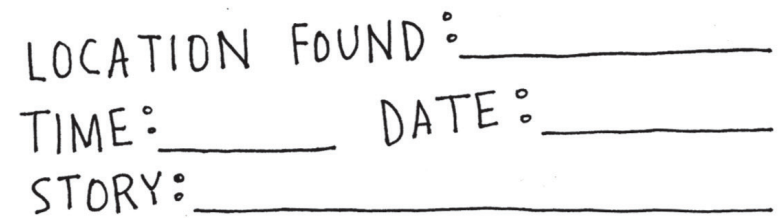
On the following pages, you'll find five items to collect. Affix them to the blank side of the page. Fill in the notes about where you found the item. Under "story" you can describe the circumstances surrounding the scavenge. You may also choose to write an imaginary story about the item.

Once you are finished, ask a friend, classmate, or teacher to randomly assign you an alteration from "Ways to Alter Your Scavenged Item" (page 7). Or, just close your eyes and point to one of the prompts. Alter the item as directed. How you interpret each alteration is up to you.

These alterations will allow you to create something entirely new. Think of them as a selection of possibilities for outcomes different than what you would have done if you were given a choice. The alterations are where your genius will come in. Each alteration will be interpreted differently by each person. There is no right or wrong or good or bad in terms of how the alteration is performed. You might love the results; you might find them uninteresting. That is part of the fun—not knowing what will occur.

Happy scavenging!

KERI SMITH



TIME: _____ DATE: _____

STORY: _____

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with ten horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

2

THE NUMBER FIVE

5

LOCATION FOUND: _____

TIME: _____ DATE: _____

STORY: _____

PAPER CLIP



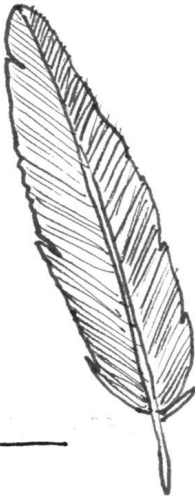
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4

A FEATHER



LOCATION FOUND: _____

TIME: _____ DATE: _____

STORY: _____

5 A USED ENVELOPE

LOCATION FOUND: _____

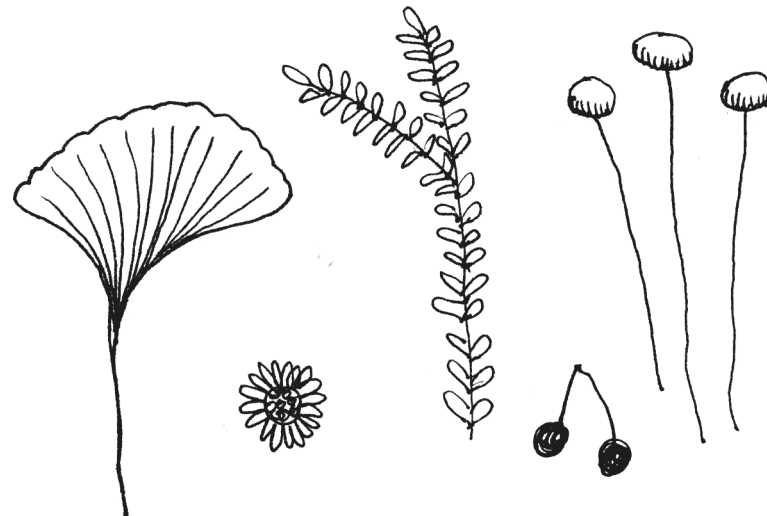
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WAYS TO ALTER YOUR SCAVENGED ITEM

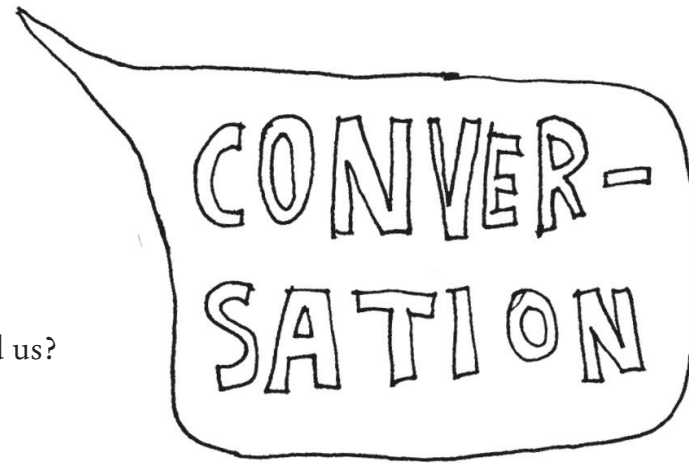
1. CREATE A FUNNY CHARACTER.
2. TURN INTO A DISGUISE.
3. CONCEAL IT.
4. ADD POLKA DOTS.
5. ADD STRIPES.
6. DUPLICATE IT (MAKE A COPY).
7. FOLD, CUT INTO PIECES, AND REARRANGE.
8. TRACE IT/USE THE SHAPE AS THE BASIS FOR A NEW DRAWING.
9. MAKE IT PRETTY.
10. MAKE IT SCARY.
11. DECORATE IT.
12. ADD SOME TEXT.
13. DESTROY IT.
14. ALTER THE EDGES.
15. ASK A FRIEND WHAT YOU SHOULD DO.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

GENERAL QUESTIONS

- What is scavenging?
- What is the opposite of scavenging?
- What is a scavenger?
- What things might people scavenge? Why?
- What types of animals scavenge? What do they scavenge? Why?
- What are the benefits of scavenging?
- Have you scavenged anything in your life?
- What can we gain from scavenging things from the world around us?



THE CREATIVE PROCESS

- How might scavenging help you be creative?
- Author Keri Smith believes "creativity arises from our ability to see things from many different angles. New connections (things that have not been connected before) create new ideas."
- Do you agree with this? Why?
- The Pocket Scavenger* begins with the following quote:
"A single inanimate object, useless in itself, can be the focus of a world." —Yi-Fu Tuan
- What do you think that means?



CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

- 👤 Assign an item for everyone to collect. Then have everyone use the same alteration. Impose a time limit for the alteration. Compare results.
- 👤 Random Scavenge: After going over standard safety rules (use a supervised location, don't take anything that belongs to someone else, etc.), ask students to pick a location, whether it be their house, a backyard, the playground, or similar. Encourage them to take a walk and to scavenge ten items. Once they've collected their items, students should document what they found on a map. Ask students to write a story about each item.
- 👤 Group Scavenge: Divide your class into small groups. Ask each group to create a themed scavenger hunt for another group of classmates, and then trade.
- 👤 People Scavenge: Create a list of traits to find (someone who is nearsighted, someone who was born in Ohio, someone who has a pet parrot), and encourage students to ask classmates and teachers to participate.

- 👤 Personal Scavenge: Pair students up. Give them a set time to interview each other about their likes: favorite colors, music, places, foods, animals, etc. Then ask each student to create a personalized scavenger hunt for his or her partner.
- 👤 Alphabet Scavenge: Arrange to take a class walk, either outside or around the building. Using a camera, document the whole alphabet. If you don't have access to a camera, ask students to draw the letters as they appear, and they share their findings.
- 👤 Urban Fossils Scavenge: Ask students to document as many fossils as they can find. These may be traditional fossils found in creek beds, for example, or they may be things that have been embedded somehow in concrete sidewalks: footprints, leaf prints, patterns, names, etc.



AN INTERVIEW WITH KERI SMITH

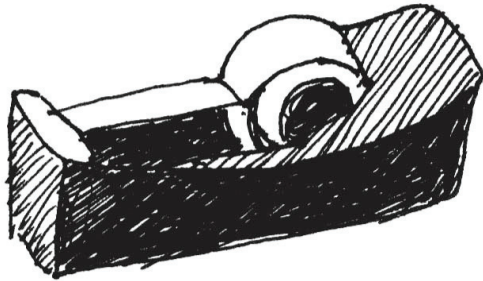
WHAT GAVE YOU THE IDEA FOR THE POCKET SCAVENGER?

I think I have always been a scavenger. I seem to have a compulsion to fill up my pockets on walks. I have often used the items I collect for my work as an illustrator or for personal work. I like seeing the world as a source for raw materials.

After seeing how readers really enjoyed the pages in *Wreck This Journal* that were about collecting, I thought it would be interesting to have a whole book dedicated to scavenging simple items. It could be something you do with friends, or something you do on your own but share with others via some form of social network. I then added the element of altering the pieces so that they could be changed into another form, possibly an art piece, or just a simple experiment in “what if?”



© Jefferson Pitcher



WHAT DO YOU HOPE PEOPLE WILL GAIN FROM THE POCKET SCAVENGER?

As with all my books, I hope that daily life might be enhanced or reanimated by the act of looking at it with different eyes. With *The Pocket Scavenger*, I hope that it might turn the world into a kind of game board, with the reader being given a quest to seek out specific items. And this “game” causes us to tune into our environment a little bit more, pay attention to things. We can also enjoy the experience of seeing what others have collected, and seeing how our alterations are different (not good or bad, just different) than others. The point is not to make it beautiful; the point is to partake in an experiment, to see what happens.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE SCAVENGE IN THE BOOK?

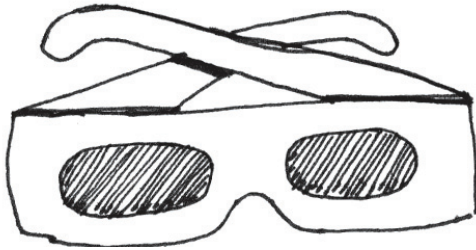
I don't know that I have a favorite one. If I had to choose, I suppose it might be the simplest one—a piece of red string. The point is actually not just the object itself but the whole experience, the going out to look, the circumstances surrounding the scavenge, the story. I am interested in the whole idea of the quest.



AN INTERVIEW WITH KERI SMITH

DID YOU ALWAYS WANT TO BE A WRITER?

In many ways I don't really consider myself a writer. I started as an illustrator, but now I see myself more as a purveyor of ideas. I like to distill things and present them in new formats. I don't like to limit myself to one medium, and I remain open to working with all kinds of different mediums.



WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR IDEAS FOR BOOKS?

As Anaïs Nin said, "in the midst of living." They happen when I am not necessarily trying to come up with ideas, often presenting themselves to me when I am least expecting it.

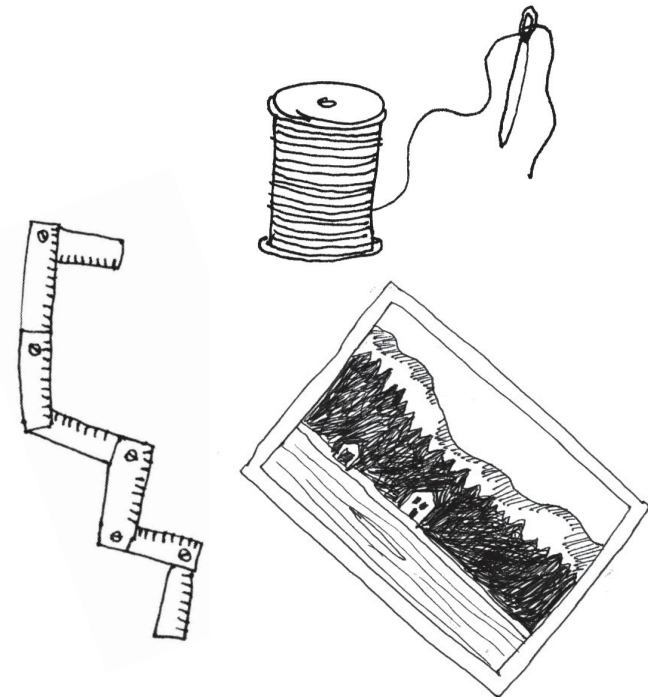
WHAT IS THE BEST PIECE OF WRITING
OR CREATIVITY ADVICE YOU'VE EVER BEEN GIVEN?

Do something else.

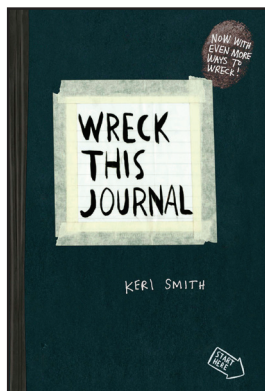
The subconscious mind is always working on things for you and will often present things to you when you are doing something else.

Walking is particularly good for this. My grade twelve history teacher (who I'm still in contact with) told me to go for a long walk for more than an hour to let the ideas flow and to stop thinking. I recently wrote down a quote by the author Annie Proulx: "Walking induces a trancelike state that allows the mind freedom and ease and encourages exploration of odd possibilities and improbable connections."

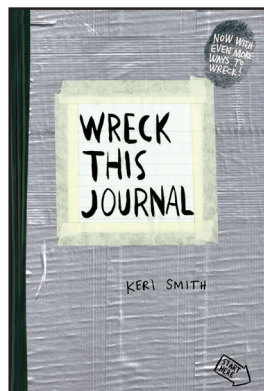
I also find procrastination highly effective. When I am supposed to be working on a project I get my best ideas for new projects.



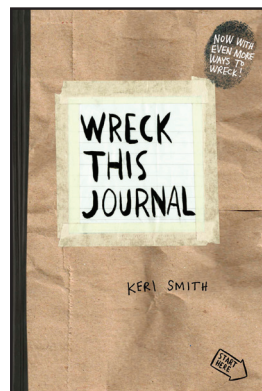
MORE FROM KERI SMITH



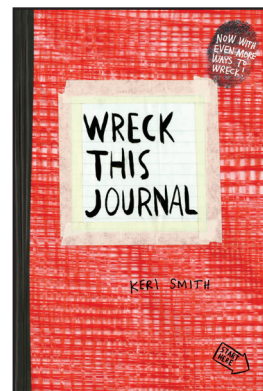
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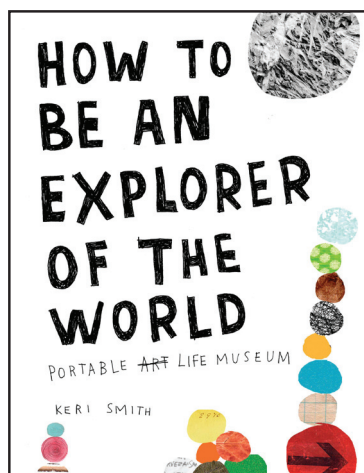
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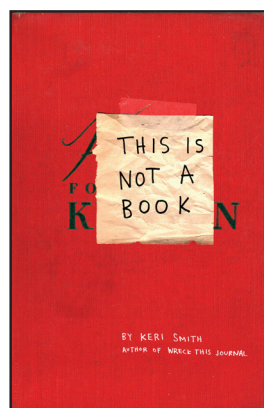
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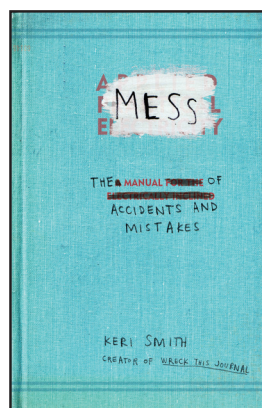
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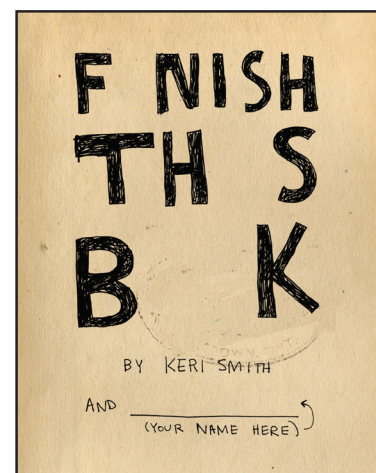
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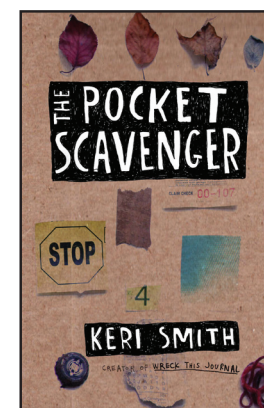
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