my (small press) writing day

Officially it's my summer holiday, but the alarm still goes off at 6.30am so we can get our youngest child to school in time. After she gets out of the door I usually grab my poetry file and edit the work in progress in my study. Recently, and unusually, it's been incredibly hot in Cornwall, so I've been taking cups of tea out and sitting at the outside table to work before the sun gets too high or too hot. And doing something similar, but with a glass of beer or wine, after dinner in the evening. I follow the same kind of timetable when I'm back lecturing at university, although I can sometimes grab time to write or edit between classes, and i make use of the poetry and art libraries too, as stimulus and background reading.

I'm a fidget kind of self-editor. Most of my writing gets knocked into shape pretty quickly, even if that involves a drastic rewrite or cut-up (I have a downloaded cut-up machine on my laptop); it's the odd full stop (period) , comma or semi-colon that I change, or deleting or replacing repeat words. I read out loud a lot and listen to the work. Most of my work is pretty regularly shaped, a lot of it is processual - syllabics, chance procedures, or simply in a series devised by me. I also do a lot of collaborative writing, so some days emails are pinging to and fro.

I've learnt, after 40 years to let ideas and themes ferment in my brain a while, but also to jot down writing as often as possible, even if it's just a single odd phrase. Then I can riff around what's starting to brew, or abandon the bits of paper for months on end if they don't suit. I often use song titles or phrases from books I'm reading to generate texts to work on: it's much easier to change a poem than face a white page.

Every so often, when finished work has been filed (hard copy, computer copy + back up hard disc, plus another hard copy if I think I might perform the work at a poetry reading) I have a flurry of submitting to magazines, and every so often I start to think about books and chapbooks, what might sit next to what, what the subject of a book might be. Recently, I've been writing prose poems and Broken Sleep Books will be publishing a selection soon. I've just submitted a new manuscript to Shearsman, who have published many of my books, and an artist friend is doing a series of lino prints of cathedrals to go alongside a series of poems I have written. I've just started working with another poet, Maria Stadnicka, on the subject of death, grief and mourning, for a research project.

Somewhere in there I fit in editing *Stride* magazine, which I started in 1982 and is now a blog, though I have recently discovered how to schedule uploads, which makes life easier. But I have to accept or reject submissions and commission book reviews somewhere in the day; and I also write reviews and articles for academic journals and *International Times*, which publishes weekly (I'm a contributing editor). Many of my academic pieces have also been collaborative and processual: finding people to write with and appropiate ways to do so, makes it all the more fun. It's been partiularly useful when writing about *Twin Peaks: The Return* and the music and apps of Brian Eno.

Rupert Loydell