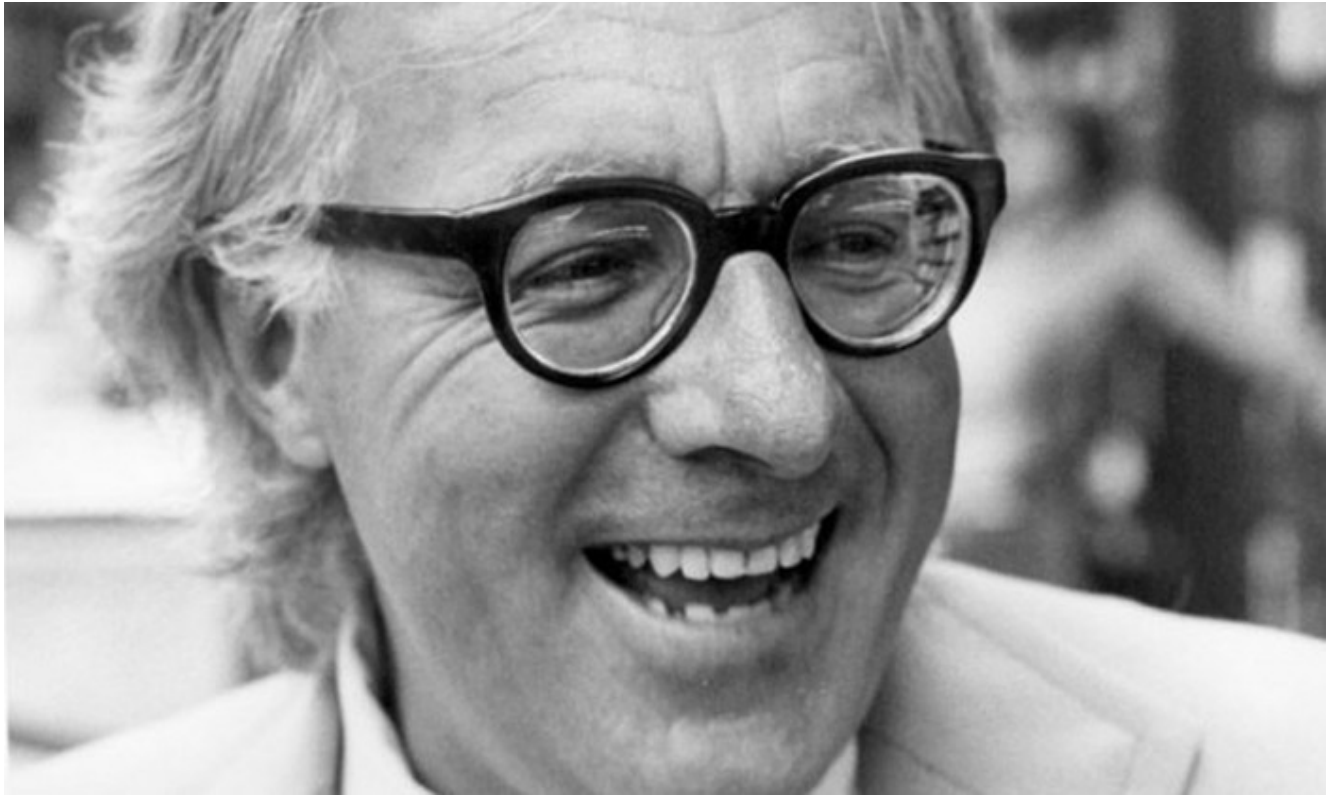


Sundays with Ray Bradbury

[Scott Myers](#)

You have 2 free member-only stories left this month.



"I can imagine all kinds of worlds and places, but I cannot imagine a world without Bradbury." — Neil Gaiman

Ray Bradbury (1920–2012) had a remarkable writing career. Author and screenwriter, here is a partial list of his writing projects:

Novels

- **1950** The Martian Chronicles
- **1953** Fahrenheit 451

- **1957** Dandelion Wine
- **1962** Something Wicked This Way Comes
- **1972** The Halloween Tree
- **1985** Death Is a Lonely Business
- **1990** A Graveyard for Lunatics
- **1992** Green Shadows, White Whale
- **2001** From the Dust Returned
- **2003** Let's All Kill Constance
- **2006** Farewell Summer

Collections

- **1947** Dark Carnival
- **1951** The Illustrated Man
- **1953** The Golden Apples of the Sun
- **1955** The October Country
- **1959** A Medicine for Melancholy
- **1959** The Day It Rained Forever
- **1962** The Small Assassin
- **1964** The Machineries of Joy
- **1965** The Vintage Bradbury
- **1966** Twice 22
- **1969** I Sing The Body Electric!
- **1975** Ray Bradbury
- **1976** Long After Midnight
- **1980** The Last Circus and the Electrocutation
- **1980** The Stories of Ray Bradbury
- **1983** Dinosaur Tales
- **1984** A Memory of Murder

- **1988** The Toynebee Convector
- **1990** Classic Stories 1
- **1990** Classic Stories 2
- **1996** Quicker Than The Eye
- **1997** Driving Blind
- **1997** The Golden Apples of the Sun and Other Stories
- **1998** A Medicine For Melancholy And Other Stories
- **1998** I Sing The Body Electric! And Other Stories
- **2002** One More for the Road
- **2003** Bradbury Stories
- **2004** The Cat's Pajamas: Stories
- **2005** A Sound of Thunder and Other Stories
- **2007** Now and Forever: Somewhere a Band is Playing & Leviathan '99
- **2007** Summer Morning, Summer Night
- **2009** We'll Always Have Paris: Stories
- **2010** A Pleasure To Burn

There are a couple of Bradbury quotes I want to include in my book *The Protagonist's Journey: Character Driven Screenwriting and Storytelling*:

"Plot is no more than footprints left in the snow after your characters have run by on their way to incredible destinations."

"Stand aside, forget targets, let the characters, your fingers, body, blood, and heart do."

You can see why I like those quotes!

Like many Bradbury observations, they float around online without attribution to the original source.

Therefore, I recently picked up *Zen in the Art of Writing* written by Bradbury and am reading through it to see if I can find those two observations on the craft..

As I began with the book, it occurred to me: Why not share Bradbury's wisdom with Go Into The Story readers? Hence, a new series: **Sundays with Ray Bradbury.**

Today: From *Zen in the Art of Writing*, "The Joy of Writing," pp. 4–5.

So, simply then, here is my formula.

What do you want more than anything else in the world?
What do you love, or what do you hate?

Find a character, like yourself, who will want something or not want something, with all his heart. Give him running orders. Shoot him off. Then follow as fast as you can go. The character, in his great love, or hate, will rush you through to the end of the story. The zest and gusto of his need, and there *is* zest in hate as well as and love, will fire the landscape and raise the temperature of your typewriter thirty degrees.

— —

The history of each story, then, should read almost like a

weather report: hot today, cool tomorrow. This afternoon, burn down the house. Tomorrow, pour cold critical water upon the simmering coals. Time enough to think and cut and rewrite tomorrow. *But today - explode - fly apart - disintegrate!* The other six or seven drafts are going to be pure torture. So why not enjoy the first draft, and the hope that your joy will seek and find others in the world who, reading your story, will catch fire, too?

This is a wonderful crystallization of the Bradbury spirit of writing: When you sit down to write, don't think. Feel. This holds especially true for the first draft. No matter how in-depth you may have broken your story in prep, all the way down to a scene-by-scene outline with copious notes for each scene, when you take an initial pass at the material, come at it from an almost meditative, feeling state.

Close the door. Turn off your phone. Take some deep cleansing breaths. Move from *this* world into your **story universe**. Yes... go into the story.

Feel what your characters are feeling. Where are they at this **precise moment** in their respective emotional lives and psychological journey?

Put your fingers on your keyboard... and just type. Let the words flow. Go from the beginning of the scene to the end of the scene. Follow the lead of your characters into and through the scene-writing process.

Explode! Fly apart! Disintegrate! Feel! Feel! Feel! As Bradbury notes, you will come back to each scene rewriting them multiple times, bringing a more critical eye to them. But for that first draft, give yourself over to your characters and embrace where they are emotionally.

Takeaway: As Bradbury suggests, you will be able to tap into the emotional life of your characters if you work with characters who are dealing with significant emotional dynamics: Love. Hate. Want something. Not want something. That acts as a kind fuel to feed narrative drive...

And to feed your own drive in writing the story.

To learn more about Ray Bradbury, check out this website: raybradbury.com.

For previous Sundays with Ray Bradbury articles, go [here](#).