

From Page to Stage

breakfast, empty the pencil sharpener, you know. Bam. Right in the middle of pouring coffee. There it is. Angles. Color. My sister's garden. A cellar door. It's the only way.

My imagination improves with use and reflection. Practice keeps it in shape. The real skill is learning to listen to your imagination. An understanding of Jungian symbolism and mythology has helped me to interpret and better use my imagination.

I know this sounds crazy but I have this notion that my bulletin board is a reflection of my imagination. Every time I change the stuff on it—pretty often as you know—I think it's because my imagination is improving and I'll be able to make a better bulletin board. I probably rearrange my bulletin board every time I design a set.

I imagine myself walking around inside the play, saying the words, wearing . . . what? I sit down, get up, sit down again. I'm saying the same words. Suddenly I'm feeling a sleeve, tight at the wrist. The feeling always comes first. Then I begin to see it. I back off. The character stays. Now I can see the shape. There's no detail, but it's enough to draw.

Too little use of the imagination makes it more difficult to draw on, as if it gets hard like cold molasses and won't pour. My imagination is like rechargeable batteries. It recharges best if it's just been used up and loses its charge if left on the shelf too long. This is also how muscles work, get tired, rest, grow (when resting after being tired), and atrophy with disuse.