**First Thoughts**, excerpt from *Writing Down the Bones* by Natalie Goldberg

Just dive in. Begin where you are.

1. **Keep your hand moving.** Don’t pause to read what you’ve just written. That’s stalling and trying to get control of what you’re saying.
2. **Don’t cross out.** That is editing as you write. Even if you write something you didn’t mean to write, leave it.
3. **Don’t worry about spelling, punctuation, grammar.** Don’t even care about staying in the margins and lines on the page.
4. **Lose control.**
5. **Don’t think. Don’t get logical.**
6. **Go for the jugular.** If something comes up in your writing that is scary or naked, dive right into it. It probably has lots of energy.

These are the rules. It is important to adhere to them because the aim is to burn through first thoug­hts, to the place where energy is unobstructed by social politeness or the internal censor, to the place where you feel you are writing what your mind actually sees and feels, not what it thinks it should see or feel. It’s a great opportunity to capture the oddities of your mind. Explore the rugged edge of thought.

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