This assignment is paraphrased from Dr. Pizza's podcast "Creative Peptalk." If you'd like to listen to the whole episode, you can follow this link: https://www.creativepeptalk.com/episodes/289

Exercise 1 - *Identifying where your creative sensitivity is:*

Make a list of five creations that have made a big impression on you. What creative things have you consumed/encountered that made your creative Richter scale go off the charts? These could be movies, photographs, paintings, songs, books, etc. Don't try to find a theme or any coherence to your list. Just identify them. For example, Dr. Pizza shared some from his collection: retro design ephemera he finds at garage sales, Jim Henson's "Fraggle Rock," Dr. Seuss's *Wocket in My Pocket*, and Antoine de Saint-Exupery's *The Little Prince.* Some of mine might be Dave Stamey music, American folk art, natural history museums, and Jules Breton's painting "The Wounded Seagull."

Exercise 2 - *Find patterns in your collection:*

Once you've made a list of five creations, tell yourself there are no coincidences. There must be reasons why you resonate with those things. What is it that draws you? Make a list of 5 descriptive words for each creation in your list. Narrow it down to five descriptive words that define all of the creations in your list (or at least most of them). For example, Dr. Pizza found that the word "hiddenness" defined all the creations from his list. When I made my list, some of my words were whimsical, ambiance, and primitive.

Exercise 3 - *What does it mean?*

Relate the 5 words back to your own experience. This exercise will help you discover the "why" behind your work. Understanding the "why" will give you a clearly defined creative target, which is the key to becoming undeniably fantastic as a creative person. For this exercise you're going to look at your list of five words and ask "why" five times. For example, when Dr. Pizza did this with the word "hiddenness", this was what he came up with:

> Why do I like hiddenness?
> > Because it's cool.
> Why is it cool?
> > Because it's powerful.
> Why is it powerful?
> > Because the most essential things in life are hidden (love, religion, etc).
> Why are these things essential?
> > Because life is boring if it's just about pain and suffering.
> Why do I put boring in the same breath as pain and suffering?
> > Because I have ADHD and things easily feel meaningless. **There must be more to life than maintenance**.

Start by doing this exercise on one of your words. Then do a second one. Then a third. See if the results seem to relate to one another. Your five descriptive words and the "why" behind them is your target.

Exercise 4 - *Decoding the mechanics of your target:*

Once you have found your target, go back to your list of creations from step one and review them with your target in mind. Identify how each creation hit your target. For example, Dr. Pizza looked at the creations in his list and asked how they created that mystical feeling of hiddenness (part of his target). *The Little Prince* uses the gap between words and pictures—the mystery between them—and how it leaves things to the imagination. In Dr. Seuss there's the Wocket hiding in the pocket and an unseen Vug under the rug.

Exercise 5 - *Critique your five creations:*

Critique each your five creations—how well did each hit your target? Could it be improved? Was it a bullseye, or are there things you would change? This is the step where the artist is born. Hopefully your creative sensibility, taste, and point of view will be so well defined that the work of your heroes no longer satiates your creative hunger. The only thing that will satiate you is your own work. The student has to be something their master isn't, otherwise we wouldn't need them. The moment you make work that your heroes wouldn't make, you become the hero of your story and no longer a bit part in their story.