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Shake Hands with the Muse

By Marian Calabro

Make a quick sketch. Don't agonize. Just spill it out.
Chewing a thumbnail will only slow your quicksilver thoughts.
This is how real artists work, so I'm told.
Start the flow. Turn on the faucet.
Don't get in your own way.
Why do we do that?
The light turns green.
But we stop.
Draw a
thumbnail.
First thoughts.
A way forward.
Let it guide you.
Shake hands with the muse
And don't let go until you
Bike, skate, or fly on your own.
Which you could do all along, like Dorothy.
Travel the world—there's no place like home.
Your thumbnail holds a map of the creative universe.

Marian Calabro is the author of *Perilous Journey of the Donner Party* (Clarion/Houghton Mifflin) and 20 other history books. She is a popular creative writing workshop leader at the Adult School of Montclair, NJ. Her poetry and prose have appeared in various journals and her plays have been produced at community theaters in the New York metro area. She is a lifelong New Jerseyan and a graduate of Rutgers College, where she majored in English.