

“Writing Life”

Memo:

For this last challenge, I really wanted to work on my punctuation and sentence structure. Before taking this class, I only really used questions to emphasize my points, relying solely on them. Yet now I want to create art that goes beyond the story I’m illustrating. I want my sentences to weave together and differentiate from one another with properly used breaks and punctuation. I like how my writing flows now, as the sentences themselves are beautiful in structure.

I do believe I have made adequate progress in this course. If I’m being completely honest, before this class I couldn’t tell you how to correctly use semicolons, colons and dashes. Now I really enjoy using them and seeing how their use can make the entire piece more cohesive.

Focus on two or three important moments in your career as a writer. Was there a moment when someone – a parent, a teacher, a friend – influenced you, either positively or negatively? Write about those moments and explain their significance. How do those moments affect you today?

Writers aren’t born– they’re made. Pulling all-nighters to make sure their essay is just right, refusing to put a book down until they see the sunrise before they mark their page, overanalyzing any text they lay their eyes upon: all traits that persistent writers **possess**. We don’t emerge from the womb writing ten page essays on the implications of specific word usage in Hamlet; we grow into it. All writers begin with picture books and vocab quizzes. What are merely assignments to be completed for others, **becomes** an opportunity to further develop our own passion. We don’t settle for a passing C grade in our elementary English classes, but rather actively try for that A+ for our own personal satisfaction. **This additional effort** does not entail a perfect grade every time; writers fail and learn from their mistakes just as any other **student** would. Yet that underlying passion– that burning fire to excel in the usage of language, to produce works that inspire and unite— makes a writer.

No one made me a writer; I did that all on my own. I will not allow anyone to claim the credit for my victories. That internal flame, the desire for more, made me a writer. Throughout my life certain teachers, parents and fellow students have impacted my progress, but they are not the ones who made me capable of success. They helped fuel that fire or attempted to distinguish it, but they did not light the match to start it.

My kindergarten teacher— Ms. Rivers— was one of the first people to encourage that flame to grow. She nurtured my fire by reading one more chapter to the class when I desperately begged her to do so, or by allowing me to stay up reading when the rest of the class had naptime, or by being exhilarated when I was the first student to finish a book all on my own. Now I wish for naptime in college, but at the time, I couldn't imagine lying down to rest when a story was left unfinished. *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr. Seuss: the first book I ever read all on my own. Ms. Rivers put that book in my hand and encouraged me to keep trying when the letters seemed to blur together. She didn't light my internal fire, but recognized it was already there, and did all that she could to encourage it to grow.

My mother— for lack of better words— is a wild card. At certain points in my life, she was the main reason my fire was **grew**, yet at others she tried to completely extinguish it. She used to read a bedtime story every night when I was little. On Valentine's Day growing up, she would take me to the bookstore to get a new book because she said "literature was my true love." My mother would drive me to the library every weekend when I read through my stack of books and was eagerly seeking another. Yet when I wanted to pursue this interest in high school, she was distasteful of my decision. I founded my school's book club, became the Editor-in-Chief of the digital newspaper, and even attended several book conferences where I was able to meet my role model authors. Yet it was never enough for her. I succeeded in all of my classes, especially

chemistry, but my fire existed solely for English. She never saw that; instead she opted to encourage me to become a chemist or any other career that would be worthwhile. I love my major but even I have doubts about it leading to a successful future. My mother planted these seeds of doubt in my mind and no matter how hard I try, I can't completely deroot them.

I think the issue is the mindset. She wanted reading and writing to be my hobby, not my life's passion. She wanted me to read books with my book club and discuss the topics with her, but never actively seek to be a part of that publishing process. My mom helped fuel my fire once upon a time, yet now she is the main reason that it flickers unsteadily.

Nevertheless, these people who encouraged or disapproved of my fire have little impact. I lit and tend to my own passion for writing, not them. My fire will exist as long as I'm alive, and their remarks or opinions will never cause it to fade.