



# Another Drop In

By: Mamadou Diallo

## Final Reflection

At the time of writing this paper I have taken 3 creative writing classes, written 3 final reflections, and created 2 chap books. Despite having taken a very similar class in my senior year of high school, which was only 2 years ago, I have solidified my understanding of myself even further. I hate being bored. I hate it with every ounce of my being. If it were up to me at the beginning of the semester, I would not have taken a creative writing class. I would have much rather taken another class for my major but seeing as how an English class was mandatory, I knew creative writing was the only class I would force myself to endure. This thought came from a place of conceit but also from the thought that I would have one of two experiences. Either I would spend a semester working on the stories that I have wrongfully neglected the last year like I had done in my sophomore year of high school, or I would have to once again find a way to make every passing day of my life entertaining and broadening my mind so I could complete assignments of a wide variety. It clearly ended up being the latter and just like I did in high school, I am grateful to have taken the class and even happier that the only essay that I had to write could be as free and relaxed as the one that I am doing right now.

Being relaxed at the beginning of the semester was something I valued a lot. Between high school and college I learned that just about anything could be turned into a story once worded correctly. My favorite assignments thus turned out to be stories about my own life. The first was about my birthday, where after a night of testosterone fueled conversation, I ended up covered in vomit wrestling a 220-pound man. Even a story like that, which in the far past I would have overlooked, turned out to be a lot more interesting. The second piece, my second memoir, is actually my favorite one. In a year where we have been stuck at home, writing about someone who has had a significant impact on my life brought me terms with just how fortunate I am for some of the people around me. I am often too busy worrying about my current situation in life and all my future plans that I forget where I am coming from. Writing about a friend I have had since I was 10 years old was a pleasant change in writing genre for me and even spurred a little emotion from me. My least favorite assignment is one that ironically could have been very personal as well. Poetry. Poetry is still one of my least favorite forms of writing. My least favorite not to say that I dislike reading poetry. I just do not like writing it. I am not very good when it comes to rhyming. I have run numerous custom-made Dungeon and Dragons campaigns and written my own fair share of riddles and each riddle I write is a chore more laborious than the last. Poetry does not have to rhyme. I have been told that this semester and in the past but the ability to tell a story that not only flows smoothly but rhymes as well has an allure on me that I still cannot shake off. It is unfortunate that I have not been blessed with the talent to rhyme.

Where my talent for rhyming is lacking, I believe I make up for in my ability to appreciate reading. Unlike the basic English class that I suffered through last semester, rereading stories from middle school such as *The Lottery*, the readings in this class were all unique and interesting in their own respect and showed me that I still have a very long way to go as a writer. *The Wife's*

*Story* was one that I loved because it beautifully told a tragedy while keeping the reader in the dark about the true events up until the very end. It had the effect of multiple parts clicking together at once with a single detail revealed and aside from my love of rhyming poetry, this is my favorite thing in any piece of work. The way my mind visualized the events of the story in my first and second reading are so different, but both come from the exact same words. In the more personal piece, *Whatever Happened to \_\_\_\_\_?*, I was given a view of woman writers that I feel that I was aware of in the past but didn't put as much thought as I should have. The way the author connects through the numerous parts of the piece, not losing my attention for a second, is something I enjoyed. It also made the events of the story, her being abused by her husband because of her talent and success in writing, even more tragic.

The beginning of this semester and the end, despite my every attempt to avoid making it so, turned out to be juxtapositions of my commitment to writing. Finding out that the class was asynchronous threw a wrench into many of the plans that I had. Had I known, maybe my Thursdays would have consisted of a single three-hour class instead of two of them, keeping in school from the early afternoon well into the night. Maybe I would have chosen a different creative writing class, if any existed, that met in person because I knew myself. I could start the semester well but when my focus was needed in multiple places at once, the first things to be deprioritized would always be the non-Game Design classes. Having been in project-based majors since junior year of high school, I was not only aware that the most difficult time of the year would be the end, but also knew that without the presence of a class to constantly pressure me to complete work, I would definitely fall behind. I did a good job at the beginning by just denying myself other assignments unless I touched Creative Writing first but the closer the finals drew, the harder that became. Eventually the prioritization of my major classes won over and after an untouched 13 weeks, I finally slipped. Regardless of that, for the time I was active in the class, I enjoyed the readings and the writings that I produced.

# Memoir

I feel like I'm a pretty entertaining person. Once you get past the Resting African Face™, mild social awkwardness, and random desires to just not say words, you'll come to realize that I can be the life of the room. I wasn't always like this, however. The Resting African Face™ was once on at all times and I could turn an entire room silent with nothing but an emotionless stare. That is until I met the third person who would have a significant impact on who I am today. The man. The myth. The goat. Freezy2ez. Yung Frisko himself. Alen. *Leonardo*. Prospere.

The two of us go way back. Elementary school was when we'd first met and since then, we've been inseparable. How I ended up friends with him is still something I wonder about, but it happened. The hyper extroverted kid who cracked jokes all the time became friends with the introvert who struggled to get even a sentence out his mouth. It was something straight out of a cliché novel. Even as a fifth grader, I pretty much had my life planned out. Survive middle school, go through high school, go to college to become a doctor. From the moment I met him however, my entire life would change. To this day we still joke about the old me and how I slowly but surely clawed my way out of my shell.

The first memory I have of Alen is in my 5<sup>th</sup> grade social studies class. He was funny. So funny that even I couldn't hold back laughs as he cracked jokes in class and subsequently ended up in the back of the classroom. He was short, had a fivehead that stood out from the abundance of foreheads in the school, and had a voice that to this day I find to be the most unique one I've ever heard. I don't actually remember much of fifth grade other than doing superman poses while waiting on line to get into class. The biggest significance he's had in my life happen after we went to middle school and became a lot closer. It's common knowledge that when you spend time with someone you start to pick up on their mannerisms. He was honest about everything, found a way to make jokes even in situations that were tense in order to relax the nerves of the people, charismatic, hardworking, the list goes on. He was the competition that helped me maintain a high work ethic through middle school. His own infatuation with art led to my eventual interest and the field. A random comment he made in our sophomore year of high school erased years of pressure from myself and my parents to become a doctor and instead shifted my goal towards becoming a struggling artist. Without him, almost everything that I am today, I wouldn't be. We are still extremely close to this day and he, with every interaction we have, pushes me to be a better version of myself than I was before. So you may have friends. They may be amazing lifelong friends with experiences some can only dream of. They may have skills and finesse in things others can only dream of. But they are no Alen.

## Short Story

Darkness spread endlessly in every direction, the sleeping form of a boy slowly descending in it. When he awoke, he was neither surprised nor afraid of the infinite darkness that surrounded him. Rather, he felt a mild annoyance, knowing what had happened. He'd lost it. Again.

From the darkness, a voice would slowly let itself be known. Its voice seemed to come from everywhere, the amused tone of it wrapping itself around the boy, X, and leaving him with no way of ignoring it. Not that he could anyway.

“Oh? Is that you again? Why are you back so soon?”

Before he had even awoke, the numb feeling had overwhelmed him. The darkness made his eyesight useless. The nature of the space took away his touch. His emotions being burnt out was the reason he ended up here. Despite all this, just the sound of the voice echoing in his ears was enough for him to, momentarily, regain control of his body to thrash around. He knew why he was here, but he couldn't figure out how. He had let an emotion of his go too wild and did something he probably would spend a long time regretting. What the emotion was and what his actions were both were nowhere to be found in recent memory. He could only listen as the voice kept on speaking and prepared himself to take the salt that would be rubbed on his wounds.

The voice began its speech, calm as a disembodied voice could sound. If it had a body, it would probably be laying on a couch falling through the abyss with X.

“You **know** why you're here. It's because you're a terrible person .”

*No I'm not.*

“You can try and deny it as much as you want but that doesn't change the reality. Here I am. A demon who you know is sick down to their core, minding my business in the prison that is your mind. I do nothing but merely exist in peace. Yet you. You who claims so much to be good, decide to use my power to harm those who disagree with you.”

*I don't even remember what I did but I probably didn't have-*

“A choice? *Of course not.* Whenever things are going your way and you can go through things with your flimsy morality. But when you can't control everyone and everything around you, you always choose to come to me, knowing well what will happen every time. Doesn't that sound just a tad bit hypocritical to you?”

*It's not like that...*

“But it is. No one brings you here but yourself. No one makes you use me but yourself. I am here because *you* brought me here.”

Guilt was the first emotion to return to X. Even as he tried to drive away the feeling gnawing at his guts and chest, the emotion wouldn't go away.

“You can deny it as much as you want but in the end, I already know that I'm a terrible person. Every time you let me out, I will hurt as many people as possible before chained back up. Even so, you're the one who decides to free.

The voice paused, waiting for an attempt at arguing but received none.

“Everything I damage is not only on me, but on you as well. So stop lying to yourself. You're a terrible person too. But that's ok. Just let me take the reins again. I'll make *everything* that hurts go away.”

# Poem

Sadly tis part cannot be omitted

## **The Forging Process**

When you lose a part of yourself you often don't realize  
until long after. Like all things essential, it isn't until it is gone that we long for it

The process is slow, unnoticeable even

And by the time we realize a piece of us is gone,  
something else has already found itself in the void that it left behind  
the differences can be stark when looking back but in the day to day  
it is not only difficult to perceive, it is outright impossible

The true reason is because nothing is ever lost,

it is merely changed

Right now you are a whole

In the past you were a whole

And even when in the future

when you have suffered great loss

You are still whole

But in each instance, the whole has changed

It goes unnoticed for the greatest forge masters, Life and Time, work in unison

One takes the tiniest of pieces,

pushing them to their breaking point

While the other picks up the pieces

Melting them back in place to create

A barely different

But still completely new

Whole



# Dialogue

This dialogue takes place shortly after the store I work at, CAVA, was overrun by customers and online orders for 2 hours straight.

**Mamadou:** BRO. I **swear** if one more fucking customer walks in here I'm kicking their damn head off

**Q:** Talk yo shit Mamadou! Fuck them customers!

**Stephanie**(Manager): No

**Mamadou:** What you mean no?! These (expletive) can't cook for themselves? like I know seasoning food is hard but they always coming to fucking cava! Wasting my fucking time! Making me fucking work!

**Stephanie:** \*hysterical laughter\*

**Mamadou:** You're laughing?!?! Word to mom's the next fucking-

\*Door to restaurant opens\*

**Mamadou**(soft and welcoming voice): Hello, how y'all doing? (whispering) I'm going to the back to do dishes

# Journals

## Journal 6

Part of the reason why I chose to be in this class in the first place was so that I could force myself to write even though the last time I seriously sat down to work on my stories was more than 2 years ago. So far, I've had a great time with writing short stories. My time with my friends has taught me that anything can be a story and the assignments that I've done so far have only further cemented that. My life managed to just sync up with the class at certain times. My story about the group that went drinking was actually something that happened the week the assignment was due, and only 24 hours before I actually wrote the assignment. I did not actually write everything that happened but there probably won't be a prompt that allows me to. This sync has not only made writing my assignments easier but also gave me a solid notepad to refer to when I begin retelling any story to my friends in a call.

## Journal 10

Dear person I have never met before,

The purpose of this letter is to serve not only as a brief overview of the class but to also serve as a warning, should you end up in the same situation as myself. My name is Mamadou Diallo, and I am currently sitting uncomfortably in a chair as I write this to you. As an online student, suffering has been but the bare minimum in a day's work. Creative writing, in that regard, has been a small window of peace between all the struggle. It was a type of shadow work for me, letting me get thoughts that were stuck in my head for too long out through a medium I was comfortable with. One such assignment, and the one where my shadow was present in the assignment itself and not erased before publishing was in Journal 5. In this journal, I was prompted to write about a moment in my life that changed me. I chose to write about the time my depression hit the biggest sneak attack ever and left me bedridden for an entire week. Writing the journal was a great time and that wasn't the only one. A second assignment that I remember clearly was the one where I wrote about my first time drinking with my friends and how it ended with vomit from another person all over me. The assignments for this class are unique to the point that you will never be bored in the time you're here.

Which brings me to my warning. Online school is not easy. It requires discipline that was not at all present in the past. This is even more so for an asynchronous class. Between all the other classes, the one or two where you do not see your teacher every single week can begin to blend away. The only way to succeed is to be able to maintain clear focus on the class. If you think you can do the assignments after all the other “harder” classes then get to creative writing, you’re probably better off just doing creative writing first. Spoken from experience.