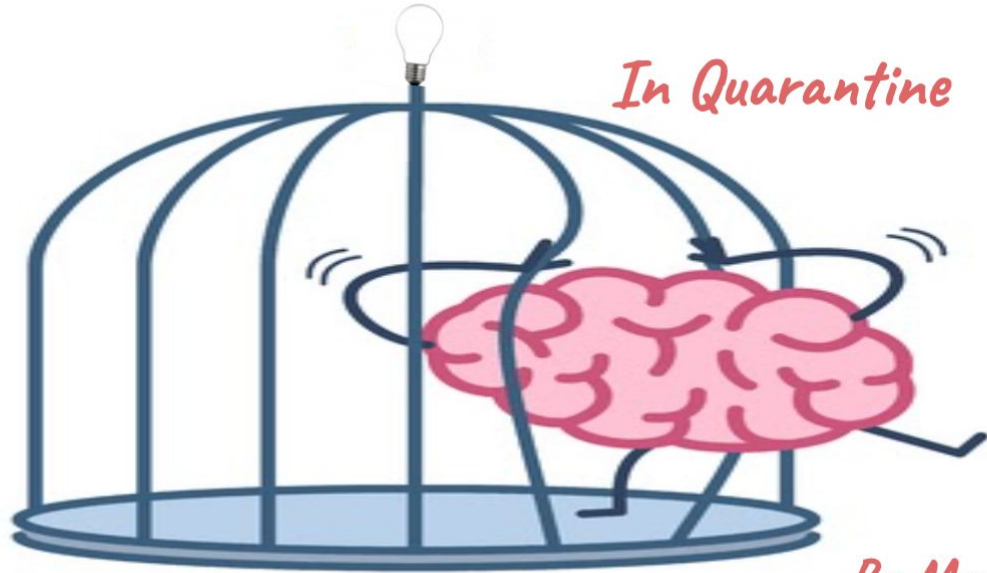


A Creative Writer

In Quarantine



By Maria Mateo

Final Reflection

This semester as a reader and writer I have learned so much. Writing has helped me to know myself better, through each step of the process I have become aware of what is important to me and what is not. I learned that for writing, words, sentences and paragraphs need to be refined to tell the story we want to tell so we can be able to catch the reader and not let him/her leave without wanting to return. When we read we have the possibility to recreate the characters, places, objects, feelings, etc which means we took all possible elements and often unconsciously we have rewritten what we just read, which made reading more fun and interesting. Creative writing class tries to convey us that reading and writing are learning and fun tools that will be useful throughout our lives. Early in the semester I was more reserved in writing about myself. Now I feel that I can be more fluid and express my thoughts, emotions, experiences and generate ideas all of which contribute to the development of my self-confidence in writing.

My favorite assignment was writing Memoirs because in this assignment I was able to share what I knew and what I lived. I wrote based on my own experiences because memoirs rescue the most vivid moments, memories and emotions of our life. The least favorite assignment was writing the short stories, I really had a hard time writing my short story because the ideas did not come easily and I didn't know where to start or what to write about. I overthink too much and get stress easily, so I had to start many times in order to get a complete story that I thought could be good. Some notable lessons that have stuck with me after completing certain assignments was that our stories, poem or journal were not just a class exercise, but that they might interest other people and that they might identify with it. Also everytime I finish an assignment it encourages a love of learning and deepens my interest in reading and writing.

When I took this class I was indecisive because I did not know if I was going to succeed because since English is my second language and in this class I was going to see a lot of writing. I was afraid of not knowing how to express my ideas correctly, and not realizing my spelling mistakes. I also thought that we were going to do a lot of poems which I don't really like but as time went by, I realized that this class offers students writing guides, elements to channel our creativity, but also allows and encourages us to write about our own stories.

I think revising each other's assignments help us to write better stories every time. Continuous monitoring of what each cohort wrote helped to progress in each genre. Every time I send my work, my cohorts respond in a way that benefits my writing and helps improve for my second draft and I was able to add better ideas that I didn't have before. I adapted very well to asynchronous writing class because every week we receive an update of what to be expected for the week. It wasn't that difficult to follow up. Every assignment that was uploaded was explained with specific details of what each of us has to do in order to complete the assignment.

Something that was particularly challenging for me was to stop overthinking and trying to make things perfect. Everytime I start to write something I overthink too much and I could not get where I wanted, because I felt that my ideas were not clear and that they were not so good. I thought that what I wrote was going to be of poor quality and that for other readers it might seem very boring. I overcame my overthinking by deciding that the ideas would flow by themselves. I decided to carry a little notebook everywhere I go so every time an idea comes to my mind I would be able to write it and not forget. This was how little by little I could do the assignments without having to stress myself. Being a perfectionist I'm still working on it because it's a bit hard to stop doing things the way you really want them to look.

Memoirs

A time I felt anonymous by choice was when I moved from the Dominican Republic to the USA a few years ago. When you arrive in a new country you might face many obstacles such as culture, adaptation, discrimination, etc. The biggest obstacle for me was the language. When you're not fluent in the language that is spoken in the country you have just moved to, you feel strange and anxious because you do not know how to communicate with other people.

My first year of high school was very difficult. Even though I understood and held conversations with my teachers and classmates, I still had my accent and I was afraid that I wasn't using the correct words or did not pronounce it correctly. Before I came to this country I took English classes but it wasn't enough to learn the language completely. I always try to be perfectionist and since I know my English was not perfect, I did not want to give myself a chance to put into practice what I learned. I felt that I had all the ideas in my head but when it came to using them I just didn't know how or when to intervene.

I did not have many friends and I didn't try to do so, for fear of being rejected. I tried my best to speak in English but some people were so mean that they pretended that they did not understand any word I said and just ignored what I was trying to say. These things at first discouraged me and made me think that I will never improve my English. At first, I was very disappointed but then, I realized that this could affect my life and my grades in school so I did everything to improve my English with the help of my teachers and people that supported me. I read a lot of books, I stayed after school and any time I had a question or did not understand something I asked for help. I'm still practicing to speak and write perfectly, and I know that with determination and motivation I will be able to do it.

Short Story

When Sofia and Edward were 9 years old they used to live in a small town called Ville. There was a tale that people always talk about. That a witch lived in Ville town. Every day after school they had to pass by a house that looked very old. The neighbors said that the witch Herminia and her mother lived there. They stand from the other side of the street to see if they could see the witch that people talked about. Sometimes they would see other kids pass by and throw stones at the house. Sofia and Edward never coincide with Ms. Herminia because they lived in different neighborhoods and they only passed by on their way to school.

It was a cloudy and gray day, when Eduardo and Sofia were leaving class around 4pm in the afternoon. Edward came up with the idea to challenge Sofia to enter the witch's house. Edward told her "I'll give you all the money I have in my pocket if you go into the witch's house". Sofia accepted to show that she is brave and said "you have to give me all your money and give me your PS4." Eduardo was not entirely in agreement with giving up his PS4 but he just wanted her to go inside. Enthusiastic Edward replied "of course, just go inside". Sofia, nervous and trembling jumped to the other side of the house. Sofia began to explore the backyard of the house and she could not believe what she saw. It had a beautiful garden filled with Peruvian lily in vibrant pink colors. Despite the fact that the house was owned by a witch and looked old on the outside, she didn't think it could have a beautiful garden. She was surprised, because as in the stories she imagined that the witch house would be creepy and ugly. Sofia continued exploring the house and suddenly a cold invaded her body when she saw that woman. She started to have rapid and agitated breathing when she saw her, she had dark brown eyes, gray hair and looked around her 60s. Sofia, gulped and asked "you're Ms. Herminia "the witch" she smiled and said "yes I'm Ms. Herminia, but I'm not a witch". Sofia thought in truth she doesn't look like a witch

because she does not look ugly, cruel or horrifying. Ms. Herminia curiously asked her "what are you doing in my house?" Sofia with a sweaty body and shaky voice replied "just came for curiosity." Sofia began to look at her from top to bottom and asked her "why do people say you are a witch if you don't have the appearance of a witch?" Ms. Herminia began to laugh out loud when she heard the girl's question and answered "to be a witch you don't necessarily have to look ugly and frightening, but anyway it doesn't mean that I'm a witch. Sofia felt ashamed because she felt that she offended that woman. Ms. Herminia with a broken voice replied "in this town people like to tell a lot of things that are not true, ”.

After hearing Sofia explain Ms. Herminia with a dry and hard voice said " You have to leave my house". Sofia nodded without understanding anything yet. Sofia left a bit confused, because for a long time she grew up thinking that a witch lived in that old house. When she left the house she saw Edward outside looking anxious. Edward pupils dilated when he saw that Sofia was coming out of the house. He immediately asked her if she saw the witch, Sofia answered "I did see Ms. Herminia but she is not a witch as people say. Edward, even more confused, asks her "why do you think she's not a witch?". She told me she's not a witch and I didn't see that she looks like a witch either, she's not ugly or creepy. The two were a bit confused, they returned to their neighborhood and decided to tell their experience to their friends, who did not believe them and decided to keep the idea that a witch lived in that house.

The End

Poem

Slowly Dying

Die slowly those who do not love passionately

who don't hear music,

who doesn't laugh

Die slowly who destroys their self-love,

Who wants to live life in a hurry

Whoever becomes a slave of a monotonous life

Die whoever gives up and does not fight for their dreams.

Dialogues

November 15,2020 1:45pm

Jarolyn: Hey Chuchis, guess what ?

Maria: Tell me , I'm not good at guessing with u

Jarolyn : jajajajaja, why u like that

Maria: You know I'm right ,

Jarolyn: I'm moving back to NY

Maria: OMG are u serious ?

Jarolyn: Yes, I'm just waiting for my mom to come from Dominican Republic this week and we're gonna start packing everything. I found a really cute home. It's a 2 bedroom apartment. My other brother is going to move with us too. So hopefully at the end of December Moving.

Maria: omg I'm so excited!! What about your job ?

Jarolyn: oh , I asked my manager for a transfer and she accepted. I'm so happy that I'm going back to NY.

Maria: Me too Chuchis , I can't wait.....

Journals

Journal #5

There are moments in life when you meet someone and naturally connect with that person. Chris and I were best friends since childhood, we grew up together and went to the same school together. We always did almost everything together, if our families went on a trip we always accompanied each other, we stayed to sleep at each other's house. But things began to change, when I told her about my problems or concerns, she seemed not to care and changed the subject quickly or just told me that those things were not important and immediately interrupted me with her own problems and told me to go out and have fun. This made me feel like the time she has is not dedicating it to me but she expects me to dedicated it to her. When I sent her messages, sometimes she didn't respond to me or it took a long time to respond and when she responded, it was because she was alone, or because she had no one else to talk to. Sometimes when I told her my ideas for my future I felt that instead of supporting me, I was discouraged.

Over time I began to realize that I listened and supported her every time something happened to her, but I did not have that same support from her. When I lost my grandmother I expected her to be by my side since she knew how important my grandmother was to me but she preferred to go visit her family in another state and when she returned she just sent me a message saying she was sorry for my loss. I was there for her, but she was only there for me when she had some interest that I could give her. Sometimes we expect something that the other person is not willing to give us, and that's what happened to me I expected from her the same support that I always gave her. Our friendship ended when we moved into different neighborhoods and went to different high schools. We no longer looked for each other, we did not talk or sent each other messages, that's when I realized that our friendship had come to an end. Not all friendships are forever, some also expire and that's it, we have to know how to accept them.

Journal #10

Dear Future Student:

My name is Maria Mateo, when I enrolled in this class, the mere fact of the title of this class seemed so interesting to me that I thought it would be the perfect class to develop my personal expression, my creativity and my way of communicating but let me tell you that creative writing goes beyond that because it is a space where you reflect, you generate thought, you confront the way you think about life, you learn to look, to discover the other side of things, to write what is observed but it is also a path of exploration of the word, from the experience of reading and writing.

One of the readings that I read during the semester and that I liked the most was “Pendeja, You Ain't Steinbeck” by Miriam Gurba. Not only is the title of this reading interesting, but also what the writer details in each paragraph, she expresses her dissatisfaction with Cummins' book. This book is intended to be a portrait of the hard experience of the immigrant to cross the border and in reality it is a book that shows stereotypes, prejudices and inaccuracies about Mexicans and their culture. I Loved and enjoyed reading this because as a Latina I identify myself because when we are being stereotyped It typically presents us in a negative light and attacks our morality, work and our ethic.

Being an online student is not easy because since you are not going to have the teacher reminding you that you have an assignment pending for the week or something like that it is stressful , but for this class it was a little more relieved because the teacher sent us email reminders of all the assignments that we had to complete and also we did not have the pressure that we had to meet at a certain time and it gave us more freedom and more time to work on assignments. My advice for you to be a successful student is that, always pay attention to your emails, complete all your assignments and reach the professor in case you have any questions or problems. This course will be useful personally and in my career because it helped me gain greater security when communicating my stories, ventures and projects in public.

Sincerely,

Maria Mateo