



The Flower

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Introduction

We see flowers in the field and when we look at them, they don't come across as beautiful because their closed. A closed flower isn't the most beautiful flower because it hasn't blossomed yet. So, you walk past it because you don't see its potential or its true beauty. Until one day you walk past this flower you've ignored every day and its completely opened. You wouldn't think it's the same flower because it's open now and the true fragrance of the flower has risen towards your nose and the colors are the most vibrant you've ever laid your eyes on. That's me. Let me explain.

This semester coming into this class, I was excited because it's my last year as a college student, so this is an elective I decided on taking to enjoy my time. I was also stressed because of two reasons: the first reason is because I've been working through the semester on my internship, and I would spend most of the class in meetings. The second reason is because I was my own worst critic when it came to writing. I would take a piece of writing that I created and would delete it or say it wasn't good enough and would just forget about it. I would talk down to myself as a writer, especially my creative side. I would be afraid to tap into it because I didn't want to embrace the creativity inside of me that I've had in me for so many years since I was a kid. I took this class because I wanted to break that stride and I wanted to write content without erasing it. I wanted to be that writer that I know I am and embrace the gift I have of creativity and as a passionate writer. I compare my work now and look back at how far I've come from the beginning or middle of the semester, I feel as though it's strong, especially because during the duration of the beginning and

middle of the semester, it was a different take. Things were much stronger at least for me in the sense that I was able to be vulnerable and break out of my mold by showing off what I was hiding. I was able to impress myself with my writing and the things I had come up with. Through each piece in the semester, I found healing within myself. Even if I changed names of characters, I had lived through these stories and was able to heal through my writing, something I never expected to experience especially in a class. I'm proud of the work I gave out during the semester.

My favorite assignment during this class had to be fiction writing. I surprised myself since I'm not a strong fiction writer. Most of what I write is close to home since I don't like to put information out there that isn't factual or that has nothing to do with me, but for this assignment I let go and was able to give myself a creative space to flow freely. Surprisingly, my least favorite assignment had to be the dialogue. I thought it was going to be poetry since I don't even like reading it for fun on my own. For me reading or creating poetry is painful, but I felt as though the dialogue topped it for me. I did enjoy reading my classmates' dialog, but doing it for me, it wasn't as enjoyable.

Revising has helped me develop my writing further. My cohort's asking me questions that helped me develop my writing and my characters which made me understand how to bring the story more to light. Those little missing details which allowed the stories to get tied together and become the backbone to it.

In terms of online classes, I love being online it's much easier for me to have access to my classes since I work as well, and I can have my company equipment and material next to me as I do work

simultaneously. I think the only thing that I had a challenge with has been close to the semester being over, with having a family emergency, it threw me completely off so it's been hard getting back on track, but I've been doing my best. Overall, I'm proud of myself because after this class I'm taking my creativity with me. I feel as though I've gained it back again and I've learned how to appreciate my art and the gift I have. I would take this class again if I could, I enjoyed it and I enjoyed the growing process that I've had through this class.

Chapter1 Memoir

Anonymous

A time I felt anonymous would be from the years of 2016 to 2019. I used to be a part of this Homeland Security internship. I'm not going to say which field in the agency out of integrity, but while I was there having that military mindset embedded inside of us made me change. We dressed the same, spoke the same, walked the same, trained with the exact same mindsets. It was a moment in which made me feel the same as everyone else.

It was difficult for me to be who I really am in front of everyone else because when you expressed a slight difference, everyone made fun of you. The training changed my perception of people. I always felt uneasy and full of anxiety. I couldn't even walk into church and feel safe because I felt as if others would attack me or had a weapon on them. It was a constant mindset of being on edge. For example, still to this day, I can't enter a restaurant without scanning to see the exit signs right away in case of an emergency. I felt as though the person I

was hiding inside me felt anonymous because I had to suppress who I am to comply with the mental changes my officers were demanding of me. I remember the smell of aircraft fuel while walking into the building for trainings. I remember the smell of shoeshine and gun powder smell that would fill the air as we trained. I remember the loss of balance in my legs when we had to stand and wait for further instructions after an extreme workout. I remember the yelling that would go on as we would rush outside running to rush towards the airplanes where there we would be greeted by police vans and practice cars. I remember always wanting to just sit down for a second to just process the information that they were giving us. The amount of information overload and loss of time was never enough.

We lived fast paced and often I felt as if I was the only one who couldn't keep up with everyone else who was already a step ahead of me. I felt as though everyone was enjoying their jobs, yet I felt this pressure in never being enough.

I remember going to the shooting ranges. I would take in the smell of gun powder because it would always excite me. I thought this

would've been my career. I remember lying down on my stomach for the first time to press my eye against the sniper rifle. I remember taking in a breath to relax and taking my perfect shots. I remember the gun powder smell right up close for the first time. I couldn't handle how much I thought I was ready.

Watching everyone else around me get brainwashed thinking that defending our country is our right and duty. I knew something inside of me just felt like I could never defend a country in which I didn't agree with its standards and values. I knew the truth. I knew me realities and became aware of it. I couldn't bare the false faces I gave outside the job just to protect those I loved. I was just 17 years old and mentally I felt as though I was 35 making decisions I couldn't even make in school. I recollect the virtual trainings with scenarios that had previously happened, yet I had to stand there and be handed a simulated gun that would releases real virtual bullets when the trigger was pulled.

I remember having to sit there and tell myself at the age of 21 if I truly

wanted this life and if I wanted to continue shutting everyone out. I would have these battles constantly, until I finally just walked away from the dream I was chasing for my own mental health. Sometimes you must choose you instead of a dream because you have to know and recognize what's more important to you. That was the moment for me. I said "no" and I walked away. I haven't changed my mind since. There is a plethora of moments in which I have thought about going back. For example, I applied to the full-time position five times, and those five times I'd withdraw my application because I would think about what the job has done to me and what it would do to me. It would be like reopening a wound that has already healed. Might as well leave it healed.

Chapter 2 Short Story

North central zoo

“WELCOME TO NORTH CENTRAL ZOO” read the sign as Ashton drove past it. It’s 2010 in Upstate New York where the fall air was starting to pick up. It’s the end of September and the gang is getting ready to break into Jonathan’s family zoo. There had been a few murders around town concerning everyone. Despite Johnathan’s family owning the zoo, he works there from time to time checking the database and systems to make sure things were up to speed. Recently, he’d found information about a recent murder and how it connected to his family zoo. He knew he needed help with the servers. The gang knew each other since High School and would help solve certain crimes alongside police since they were all involved in the patrolling program. They got involved in this program during their freshmen year of High School when Becca’s father who’s chief of North Central County saw their interest in trying to help him solve cases.

Never had they dealt with something this serious. No longer being part of this program caused some issues with gaining access to files. Ashton being a professional hacker and Hailey his wife is an

officer now who would help gain access and have legal rights.

Steven had nothing better to do, Justin was with Steven getting a drink and tagged along. Now, it was Becca who was supposed to swipe the files from the computer base that showed evidence from the cameras. Becca was supposed to tag along that day with Johnathan to check the database and instead of doing her part, she never showed up.

She dropped her flashlight as her hand started to shake trying to pick it back up. Steven bumped into her. "Hey! Would you watch it? I'm trying to reach for the flashlight." The flashlight rolled under the van. "Great Steven, look at what you did now!"

"SHHHHHHHHHH, SHUT UP SHUT UP SHUT UP Hailey!!" Justin's bright green eyes glared at her as Steven flashed the flashlight right onto him. "Okay J, I don't think we need your saliva showering us bro." Ashton and Becca came out of the van and shut the door.

"Would you guys relax? We just want to get the chip out from the computer to gain access to these files and leave that's it." "Yeah, because with Johnathan that shouldn't be too hard." Hailey said in

a sarcastic tone. "We're doing this again Hails? Reminder to all of you, I'm only here because I have access to this place. I could lose my job." Johnathan raged on as he walked away from the group.

"We wouldn't even be in this mess if it wasn't for Becca." Becca was wrapping up her long dark brown hair into a bun when she turned around towards Johnathan who was too far to say anything in a shouting tone. She ran up towards him. Justin elbowed Steven, "Dude, they're so into each other man." "Yeah, I don't know why they haven't just said anything already." They continued to walk forward.

"Ash, you're literally the only reason why I'm even here. If it were up to me..." "We'd be at home watching a movie drinking wine and eating pizza. I know I know babe, but we're always up for adventures." "Adventures! We're 22 years old and married I may add. I think we have more to lose here than breaking into a zoo at 1 in the morning!!" Hailey whispered angrily at Ashton. The breeze started to pick up as they got closer to the door. Her brown hair

started getting into her face and she started shaking from anxiousness trying to get it off her eyes so she could see. Squeaks and cracking noises started to come from the gate being opened. Johnathan dropped his flashlight as it cracked on the hard floor.

"UHHHH
guys?" "Y'all gotta see this one!" Shouted Steven.

"That'd be great, if we could see, don't you think?" Becca said as they all stood around trying to see if they could find the switch

Johnathan spoke about. Steven started to feel on the brick wall. He felt this metal lever and pulled. "I did it!" The lights started to flicker on. " They heard this huge roar coming from the pathway getting closer and closer. "RUN!" Shouted Ashton.

As they started to run, Steven couldn't help but to look back. When he looked back he saw two red glaring eyes from the far distance. He started to run faster until they all made it towards the van and Ashton sped away.

“WHAT WAS THAT?!” Shouted Ashton, everyone now out of

breath. "I'm pretty positive that's the thing that's been murdering everyone." said Steven out of breath. "Why do you say that?" asked Becca sitting next to him. "I say that because, you guys know me, I always have to look. So, when I did, I saw two large red glaring eyes. They are most definitely neither animal nor human."

"Tomorrow we have to come back and check out the cameras Johnathan." Hailey said from the front.

Chapter 3 Poems

Silk scarf

Dear Silk Scarf,

I wrap my curls every night before bed with you,
resting my head on my silk pillowcase
hoping you'll keep my curls tucked in tonight.

Oh, silk scarf

how you understand the folds of every curl on my head.
You safely cuddle it as if you've known them for a long time.

Silk scarf, you sometimes upset me
you slip off my head at night while I get out of bed to use the bathroom late at
night.

I know you feel the contempt
from my white skinned, blonde haired, straight haired
grandmother who makes remarks about you.

Silk scarf you make me feel safe.

You understand me.

You make me love the part of me I wanted to run from and deny
since I was a little girl just to capture the image, they all wanted me to.

Silk scarf, I wish there was more of your love on every little curly haired girls
head.

I never thanked you for becoming part of me and my identity.

I hid my curls for so long under many blow dryers and flat irons
to suppress who I truly am and it's all because of you.

I wrapped you on my head for the first time and felt my place.

I felt where I belong.

Oh, Silk Scarf,

thank you for being the reason my curls cuddles up with your folds every night before bed.

You too have a story that no one talks about.

Thank you, Silk Scarf.

Chapter 4 Dialogue

No way homeish

[Vee was sitting next to Kate while she was on her phone in the middle of their lunch date. They got together to have lunch since it was their break from one of their afternoon classes. Vee ran into the flyer for the new Spider-man movie and put her phone down to talk to Kate.]

VEE: OMG when are you going to see Spider-man?

[Vee's face scrunched up and rolled her eyes]

VEE: THE STRUGGLE WAS REAL THIS MORNING TO GET TICKETS

[Kate started chuckling and face palmed her forehead.]

Kate: I'm ashamed of myself girl. I'm going on the 18th. I wanted to get it for the 16th. I'm so ashamed.

[Vee's face scrunched up upset as though reliving the hassle for the tickets.]

VEE: I went through so much bs for the 17th.

[Kate burst out laughing.]

VEE: YOU THINK THIS SHIT IS FUNNY!!! People fееennnnnninnng!!

[Kate still laughing]

Kate: They dead are!! I'm 100% ready to see Tobey. They lying to us for real!!

[Vee started to laugh]

VEE: Nah, but for real!! And I thought
the theatres would be empty cos people don't wanna get vaxxed

[Kate chuckled while shaking her head in disbelief]

Kate: People don't care! I'm telling you.
This movie better be litt. Tobey better fly out the screen!

[Vee started to chuckle while
leaning forward slightly]

VEE: DID YOU PICK 3D?

Kate: HELL NO!! I don't need doc oc
trying to grab hold of me while I'm trying to see Tobey save the day like I'm
trying to survive Spider-Man not die through it

VEE:Y TU!!!

Chapter5

Journals

Journal7

When it came to this experience of poetry writing, it was a little bit more difficult for me. The experience I had almost became as if I was pulling teeth because I didn't even want to look at the blank screen knowing it was poetry. I'm not a huge poetry person so it made it hard for me to be creative and find that path or a moment that would inspire me to creative poems that I wrote. When I started, I didn't know if they were good enough. I wanted to delete my poems multiple times, but I didn't because I wanted to prove to myself that my art has meaning, and I also didn't want to start over. Once I started to get into the flow of things, I had to read my poems out loud to other people to receive validation that my poem was good enough to submit which ultimately, I did so.

Journal 10

Dear Student,

I hope that you're taking this class as an elective, but if you aren't, if it's mandatory please take a moment to breathe. This a creative writing class! Take joy from it! I took this class as an elective as a senior. It's my last year and I prolonged taking this class because I was fearful of my own writing skills. I've always been a creative writer, but I'm my own worse critic and I couldn't stand my own writing. During this class, I found healing in my own past with stories even if the characters and scenarios changed a bit, but the sentiment was there. I learned how to love my own creativity and lastly, I came out victorious on the other side of this because I learned how to write fiction and have fun with it. I even conquered my disdain for reading and writing poetry and created awesome pieces. What am I trying to say? Enjoy this class because in college everything is so serious that this is a place to let go and have fun through your own self-expression. Have fun!

Many Regards,

Former Student