

I'M DOWN HERE!

...SOMEWHERE...



A CHAPBOOK
BY KEVIN PEREA



Hello readers!

Thank you for reading my collection of writing that I have compiled throughout my semester! Every piece of writing here was written with careful thought and pride. I refuse to submit a piece that I wasn't satisfied with, and I hope that mentality makes for entertaining reads!

My name is Kevin Perea. I was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York to two Mexican parents. They're like, the cool parents if you will. I also have a badass older sister, a creative and funny younger brother, and three little sisters that will inevitably be the end of me. My dog Chico is also the best, but he kind of sucks at being a dog; preferring to lay down and stare into space than do literally anything else.

Maybe I'm being dramatic, but this year and this semester has been a time of serious reflection. After the disaster of a year that was 2020, I aimed to make 2021 a great year for me. I finally started taking deeper, more hands-on classes in the Entertainment Technology department. I also started a new job just before the semester began, and generally just trying to make up for lots of inactivity during the pandemic.

A class I've always enjoyed throughout my academic career is English. Reading and writing has always been fun for me, but it wasn't until my English Composition I class here at City Tech that it really embedded itself into my brain. However, midway through the Spring 2020 semester, the entire world began a seismic shift that has and will continue to change the world. To keep everyone safe, City Tech and schools around the world had to change the way they operated.

Throughout it all though, I had my English classes keeping my creative juices flowing. Writing fiction and non-fiction pieces was a way of expressing myself; something I desperately needed during the difficult century known as 2020. I did find it difficult to keep up sometimes but seeing the praise that I received for my pieces was something that motivated me and genuinely made me happy.

As I was registering for my Fall 2021 classes, I realized I only needed one more common core class to be finished with my general education courses. I've been on such a roll, and it was something I truly enjoyed and wanted to explore more. I had to take the creative writing class!

Most of my English classes that I took consisted of reading a piece and analyzing it. Then writing down my findings and my opinions. While dissecting great writing is fun, what I really wanted to do was create something of my own. It was something I dabbled in, but this class really let me say what I wanted.

The next couple of pieces are works I created throughout the semester. They are a memoir piece, a fictional short story, a poem, and a dialogue piece.

For my memoir, I wrote “Meet My Comic Books.” In class, we were asked to present something that meant a lot to us. It could be anything, and I’ve seen a couple of students put down boxing gloves, CD collections and many other things. So, I choose something a little unconventional myself: my comic book collection. A contender for favorite written piece, I wrote about my first time reading comics when I went with my dad to his job. I thought they were cool, but when my dad told me that he liked comic books as kid, I felt a bigger connection to them. He wasn’t as big of a geek as I am about them, but it almost felt like a generational thing that I had to read them. Then I wrote about my favorite comic book character, Spider-Man. I grew up obsessed with the Sam Raimi trilogy back in the mid 2000’s, and because of those movies I watched the cartoons, played the video games and eventually read the comics. I really enjoyed walking through memory lane and it let me reflect on the importance of the superhero genre and my family in my life.

The short story, inspired by Image C from our writing exercise, was another top contender for my favorite piece. For this one, I truly let my creativity run wild. As a huge superhero geek, I borrowed from multiple of my favorite comic book characters. I took the abilities and intellect of a Tony Stark, the family, financial, and teenage problems of a Peter Parker and paired our character with a powerful world leader similar to a Lex Luthor. I put them in a compelling story that easily defined the hero, our hard-working, down on their luck hero, and the villain, the powerful, rich man that isn’t held accountable. Comic books 101. What I also really liked about Image C was that a black woman was our main character. Representation matters and big content creators like Marvel and DC are starting to realize. There are established heroes like Black Panther and Cyborg, as well as the new generation of Marvel heroes like Miles Morales’ Spider-Man and Kamala Khan’s Ms. Marvel. They are going to be looked up to by kids of all races and ethnicities. Writing a superhero story starring a underrepresented group was the most fun I’ve had writing a fiction piece. Maybe I can be a writer for Marvel.

My poem “Just a Kid from Brooklyn” was an interesting assignment for me. To be perfectly honest, this piece just sort of fell out from my head. For my first poem, I wanted to create something that gave a small peek into my life and why going to college was so important to me. Life wasn’t always easy, and I know kids I grew up with had it even worse, but I always had the determination to reach my goals. Growing up in lower-income neighborhoods in Brooklyn, there wasn’t many people to look to for advice for college or even high school for that matter. I had to carve a path for myself towards college. This started as a reflection on college, but it turned into a quick summary of my life and all its obstacles that I had to endure for one reason or another. To churn this out, I just turned my thoughts into words and then organized it to give more of a poetic flow. It resulted as one of the realest peeks into my life and my journey to this school and this poem is one of my proudest works in my entire academic career.

Next, I wrote a piece of dialogue. It’s about my friend Esther and I trying to get tickets late at night and struggling to because of high traffic online. This is a very real conversation we had on November 29; the day *Spider-Man: No Way Home* tickets went on sale. Not sure if I

mentioned this before, but I really like Spider-Man. So, I HAVE to watch *No Way Home*. I tried to buy tickets right as they went on sale, but I guess everyone else did also. As soon as I tried to pick up the tickets, all movie theater sites crashed. I was up until 3 AM updating Esther on if we got something. We were losing hope, and we decided to go to sleep. I took a shower and just before going to bed, I decided to give a quick look at Regal. And low and behold, tickets for *Spider-Man* were available. I bought tickets for my friends and I and updated everyone immediately. Writing this was fairly simple. I did have to tweak it a bit. My friends and I use lots of abbreviations and informal slang, but other than that it was a straight conversation I wrote down.

Lastly, I put down two journal entries from throughout the semester. One was about my group of friends and what they meant to me. I was a shy kid growing up, and my friends that I met in high school let me be myself and took me in. They're like a second family to me now, so I wanted to honor them. My second journal entry was about a more serious topic: whether I've felt anonymous before. I've felt anonymous for lots of my life, and through school and life I've become more confident. This entry was a more personal one. I opened myself up to lots of people that would read this, and it actually felt pretty good. Putting your feelings into words and seeing them out lets you wrangle all your thoughts and emotions and this journal entry help me reflect and be proud of myself.

Creative writing class here in City Tech was a very enjoyable one and one of my favorite liberal arts classes that I've taken. Not only has it made me a better reader and writer, but it also allowed me to reflect on myself on a human level. I always found myself to be better at expressing myself through writing than through words, and all the assignments and exercises let me release some of my thoughts onto another medium rather than have it swarm my brain all the time.

I'm thankful and proud of what I've been able to achieve in this class. Simply put, the following short stories, memoirs and poems were ideas, messages, and hopes that I had clogging my mind. Struggles, hopes, dreams, inconveniences, or simply silly ideas, putting them down into writing was almost therapeutic, especially after one of the toughest times in human and my personal history. So, thank you for taking the time to read my work. I believe this is some of my best work because for the first time, I truly put myself into words.

Thank you!
Kevin Perea

Memoir - "Meet My Comic Books"

I was always a big superhero geek. I have probably seen all the movies Marvel, DC and other comic books publishers have put out, but I was never a big comic book guy. I just didn't like reading much as a kid. I could have Spider-Man 2 playing on loop all day long but would never pick up one of his comic books.

That changed in the summer when I was around 7 or 8 years old. I wasn't in school, so my father would take me to his job. At the time he worked at a restaurant, so I couldn't do much to help. This was also right before smartphones and tablets blew up, so I didn't have anything like that to entertain me. Therefore, before clocking in for work, my dad would take me to a convenience store over at the next block to find things to keep me occupied. He bought me drawing pads, pencils, crayons etc. so I wouldn't get bored.

One day, he noticed that the store carried 3 packs of comic books. They were all mismatched stories and characters, and I probably wouldn't have understood what was going on anyways, but my dad bought them for me anyways; at least just to look at the great art for a few hours. I did end up enjoying the comic books though. They were a lot of fun and I loved them more when my dad told me that he also loved reading comic books growing up. He was a poor farm boy in Mexico in rough conditions, but he would always scrape enough change to buy a comic book that would allow him to escape from the everyday struggle. Comic books carried a little more weight afterwards because this felt like my father passing on one of his favorite childhood pastimes onto me.

Most of the comic books I had when I was younger were thrown away because I wasn't responsible enough to take proper care of them, but I recently began the hobby again. After spending most of my quarantine glued to a screen, I began to pick up reading again. On my way to see if the Strand in Union Square was open, I noticed that the comic book shop Forbidden Planet was open as well. I browsed around and remembering how much fun I had reading this stuff, I picked up a copy of *Spider-Man: Life Story*. I'm trying to pick up the newer series and story arcs, but it can be difficult since many series date back to the 60's and 70's. Graphic novels are also great because they compile multiple issues revolving around one storyline.

Though comic books themselves haven't been a huge part of my life, the stories and content that have been adapted into movies, games, and TV shows have had an indelible effect on my life. Comic books and superhero media in general have taught me a lot about myself on a very human level. My favorite superhero and fictional character is Spider-Man because he is the ultimate relatable character. Personally, I see Peter Parker getting picked on by the big jocks for being nerdy and smart and I see myself in middle school getting picked on by the cool kids. Things always seem to go south for Peter no matter how hard he tries to balance school, work, and being Spider-Man, and I think lots of us remember a time where the world seemed overwhelming and too much to handle. However, despite all the challenges, Spider-Man never gives up on helping those in need. It's something I try to emulate in life; I'm not fighting Thanos or saving the universe, but I try to do things that no matter how little they might be, helps someone through their day. Superhero media sends messages like these to its audience, and I think that picking up the original source material is important in absorbing all the messages and themes that said

character is trying to convey. Despite being a fictional character, his stories, themes, and mediums are inspirational. In fact, two inspirations for choosing to study sound design were *Marvel's Spider-Man* on the PlayStation 4 and *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*; I loved the story they told not just through visuals, but by the soundtrack and unique sound that both possess. I hope one day to help create something that kids like me can look at and feel empowered. And while my dad is not as passionate about comic books and superhero media as I am, I'll always be grateful for him introducing this wonderful genre to me.

The superhuman traits of comic books are amazing to see; it puts the "super" in superhero. However, ultimately what brings people to comic books and the sci-fi genre in general is seeing people struggle with what seems to be insurmountable challenges and then pushing themselves to do incredible things. The premises in comic books are always wild, unrealistic, and flashy, but what makes the stories and characters so memorable is how we see the world, society, and ourselves in them.

Short Story – “Sasha and the FuenteTron”

In the not-so-distant future of 2099, Earth is in the height of its technological advancements. The country is as powerful as it has ever been, and President Burns would like to keep it that way. President Burns ran his campaign by portraying himself as a hero for the working man, despite being heir to the famous Burns fortune. He likes the juice that comes with being leader of the free world. He doesn't take threats to his position lightly. With a new mechanized robot unit surrounding the White House to protect him, it became much harder to threaten Burns physically, and protesters are intimidated to act against him.

Sasha Fuentes is a young high school student with super-genius intellect. She always took a liking to her father's Rodrigo work as an electrical engineer in the military. Sadly, at 14 years old, Sasha and her father were involved in a car accident involving a drunk driver. Her father passed away, and Sasha's lower arm was amputated.

The Fuentes family was devastated. Sasha's mother Gina had the love of her life taken away from her and she had to take care and support her distraught daughter, by herself no less. To make things even worse, Gina tried to sue the drunk driver to at least be compensated for the terrible situation. Unbeknownst to the Fuentes family, the driver was Eric Griffin, a close ally and cabinet member to the Burns Administration. With President Burn's influence and bank account, Gina and Sasha knew that nothing much would be done in a court.

Sasha tries to raise awareness of her situation but was constantly shut down by President Burns and his cronies. The constant setbacks haven't stopped her from trying to meet with the man himself and give her a piece of her mind.

Despite the constant obstacles, Sasha continues to thrive in her senior year of high school. She earns all A's, high honors, and a grant for academic excellence. She inherited her father's electrical engineering smarts, as well as his willingness to help others and do the right thing. She needs to expose President Burns to the world, one way or the other.

With some of the grant money, Sasha upgrades her arm prosthetics to equip them with electric abilities to aid her in her engineering efforts. Wanting to save of the grant money to help her mother out, she begins to scrap together some old, unwanted pieces of metal and machinery to create her own weaponized mech-suit; a formidable opponent for the robo-police at the White House, just in case.

Her plan is to speak to President Burns diplomatically and peacefully and if anything goes south, the camera strapped to Sasha's blazer will record everything and she can expose his treachery and façade to the American people.

With her trusty cyborg dog Stark at her side, Sasha devises a plan to break into the White House and finally pull the veil off the beloved President Burns. In the very likely situation that the robot police come after her, she's ready to bust out her biggest and most ambitious project yet: the FuenteTron 3000

Poem – “Just a Kid from Brooklyn”

3 years at City Tech

Sure, it’s a small public school

Definitely not Harvard or Yale

But it’s college

I don’t want to leave home yet anyways

Seeing the acceptance mail

It was one of

If not the biggest accomplishment in my life

For some it’s just another step in the American Experience

But people like me haven’t experienced this

And when I say people like me

I mean kids from the lower income sections of Brooklyn

The East Flatbushes and Brownsvilles all the hipsters seem to forget about

I mean the first-generation students

The ones that’ll have to navigate through this journey by themselves

I mean the children of immigrants

The ones that have to see their parents bust their asses for long hours to keep food on the table

Of course, there are still struggles

Sleepless nights

Anxiety

It's never easy

And maybe I won't actually work in the field I'm studying

But there's something much more important at stake

I have hopes and dreams in my chosen field

That's why I'm studying it

But what's more important than the job or the diploma

Is showing everyone

That a shy, dorky kid from Brooklyn

Can put his mind on whatever he wants

And he can achieve it

No matter the odds

Dialogue 1
Nov 28 11:59 PM

Kevin: Dude it's almost time!!!

Esther: Yes! Can't wait!

Nov 29 12:04 AM

Kevin: Wtf dude!

Esther: What's going on?

Kevin: I think it crashed! There's way too many people trying to get in!

Esther: I keep getting errors

Kevin: Same wtf!

Kevin: Ughhh! They're going to sell out!

Esther: Maybe check Sunday or Monday times

Kevin: Alright I'll check other websites and theaters too!

Nov 29 1:44 AM

Esther: Any luck?

Kevin: I've been on line for tickets for about an hour.

Kevin: Regal and Atom are still down.

Esther: Same. It's says I have to wait 36 minutes

Kevin: I got 31. I'll keep trying Regal

Nov 29 2:15 AM

Kevin: Holy shit! I'm almost through! It's loading!

Esther: Ok ok! You're the closest! Get tickets for everyone!

Nov 29 2:17 AM

Kevin: NOOO! It's another error!

Esther: WTF!

Kevin: UGHHHH! Why the fuck did I wait for then?

Esther: I have a test tomorrow at 10 AM!

Kevin: I have a class and then work!

Esther: Dude I'm really tired.

Kevin: Same. I still have to turn in this work.

Kevin: We gotta get these tickets though. We've been waiting for months!

Esther: Ok ok!

Esther: If we don't get these at 3 AM though, I'm going to bed and trying tomorrow.

Nov 29 3:01 AM

Esther: That's it

Esther: 3 hours and nothing

Kevin: Damn it

Kevin: You're right. It's late and I still gotta turn this in. I'll finish quickly and go to bed.

Kevin: Hopefully they'll have tickets for next week.

Kevin: Ugh this fucking sucks.

Esther: Alright well. Have a good night.

Nov 29 3:47 AM

Kevin: I GOT EM!

Kevin: I GOT EM!

Kevin: I GOT EM!

Kevin: I GOT EM!

Kevin: I GOT EM!

Kevin: I GOT EM!

Esther: Wait what?!

Kevin: I GOT EM!

Kevin: Opening day at 6:10 PM!

Esther: OMG FINALLY!

Kevin: I was able to get 5 seats for all of us!

Esther: How did you get through the app?

Kevin: Just before going to bed, I refreshed

Kevin: Just to see if anything popped up and I got them

Esther: Wtf

Esther: Whatever man. What's important is that WE GOT THEM!

Journal 1

I was never one of the popular kids in middle school. I was a social outcast for most of my life and I had only a handful of people that I can genuinely call my friends. We were all close but when we all graduated middle school, we all went to separate high schools and we haven't spoken to each other much since.

My sister and I both attended the same high school; she was the only person I recognized in the new hallways. But while I was the quiet, reserved nerd in middle school, my sister Britany was the cool, popular girl that everyone was friends with. Being so social, my sister made many friends and during our walk to the train station, she would bring all of her new friends along. We all bonded, hung out and they were able to crack open the shell I imposed on myself in middle and elementary school. To this day, they are my closest friends.

In this group, we have Evelyn. We share similar tastes in music and in being outcasts of sorts. We both had our first period geometry class together and we've especially grown close together. Likewise with Esther; we bonded through our shared Mexican culture and sense of humor. We also share birthdays which we like to celebrate together! Bryan is probably the first friend I made myself who was then integrated into the group. We met when I said something in Spanish and he responded in Spanish. We shared many interests together and we like to ask each other for advice. I met Jaylene specifically through Britany and Evelyn, and the theme throughout our friendship is her pushing me around and bullying me. There is also Alfonso. He's the comedian of the group who always finds something witty to say. Next, we have Rubaiya; she's the goody-two shoes of the group and is also constantly being teased on. We also have Nya. To be perfectly honest, I didn't like Nya at first; she was very loud and seemed kind of annoying, but she has a very energetic personality that I grew to love as I began to open up socially. Our newest addition to our crew is Ty, who's an all-around great guy who you can hang out with and have a laugh.

It's not the biggest group in terms of numbers, but these guys have made a very positive impact on my life. Everyone was just a young 9th grader who were starting to navigate through life and we were there to support each other along the way. Personally, they helped get through social anxiety and they let me be myself which is something I don't think I've been able to do with other people. I love being with these guys and acting like idiots for a couple of hours. Thankfully, even though we have all chosen different paths of life, we still see and talk to each other regularly. We've gone through many things good and bad together and I can genuinely say that they are like a second family to me.

Journal 2

A good chunk of my life has been lived anonymously. Sometimes it was voluntarily, other times not. I was and sometimes still am shy and a bit introverted. It was always very hard for me to make friends.

As such, I didn't always feel heard. I was acknowledged a lot; I was usually titled "Student of the Week" in elementary school, but I was never known as anything more than "the good kid." While this did have its perks, it still would have been nice to have a face along with that name.

This carried itself onto middle school. Not many friends, and even with the few that I did, I felt more like a sidekick than a friend. If I had anything to say, it wasn't taken very seriously and if it was, I wasn't handed much credit.

This probably contributed to putting myself in a bubble a lot. I thought "why bother to speak my mind if no one will listen?" At that point, I was comfortable being anonymous. I was afraid to speak up, rather having someone else do it for me. In all honestly, sometimes it's still something I struggle with.

I think compared to those days in middle school and early high school, I have improved a lot. I've met a bunch of people that helped me grow as a student, professional and as a person. I'm much more social around people, and I think I can comfortably say that I have a voice that has been heard.