

Dignity



Off

The Final Portfolio

By: Saba Chaudhry

Final Reflection

As I begin reflecting on my time in this class as my final assignment, I hope to send my message strong and clear. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in this class. I will admit there was a lot of work. However, that work allowed me to accept myself as a writer. I may sound repetitive but I am so glad I have learned how to appreciate my bazillion thoughts. Very early on in the semester, I felt I was eager to write. This class was my first creative writing class since high school. I was very excited to be able to express myself. I dove right in with my feelings. I know others would have a different response. Probably that they started off reserved. But I think I went all in and then eased myself down. Previous professors and teachers had taught me to condense my feeling and thoughts. But in this class, I was taught to run with those feelings as edits could always be made.

Looking back my favorite assignment was writing a fictional short story. I spoke about these characters Kol and Luna. This was the first time I got to express my creativity. I got to imagine a world for my characters that were literally out of this world. It was my favorite because I felt so connected with that story. It had always been my dream to write a story. Growing up I was obsessed with reading books. My favorites were Harry Potter, Divergent, The Hunger Games, Percy Jackson, Starcrossed and so many more. Each of these books transports you into a different universe where anything is possible. My inspiration for this story came from these books. The magic, the futuristic setting, is absolutely insane. I hope to do the same with this piece.

Along with learning how to write, I learned many lessons in this class that changed my perspective on certain things. I used to hate peer edits. It wasn't because I believed I was an amazing writer that no one else could dare critique. It's because the people wouldn't know how to edit. I personally didn't know how to either. I learned that others' opinions can help your writing or they can hurt them. It's important to find your balance. The way Professor Penner, organized our critiques really helped me heed my peer's advice. I felt like I was properly getting good advice. The compliments helped morale, and the critiques helped writing.

Another thing that I found that benefitted me and my time in this class was the different categories we were writing on. The switch in genres forced me to look at things differently. I had to adapt to the new version of writing I had to write. It allowed me to

my mind. I believe this class lives up to its creative writing name. It allowed me to branch out and adapt quickly to what was being asked of me. Critique writing was something I found challenging but helped me explore thoughts that could benefit other students. As a writer, it also taught me how to look at my writing in a non-bias way. I found what I really like to write, which was my fictional writing piece.

At the beginning of this class, as I said before, I believed I wrote too much. I expressed before that I have too many ideas and I was often told that was not good. But it was our professor for this class that told me to accept that. And it worked. Instead of hating that about my writing. I encouraged it and edited it after where it was needed. I feel now ideas and thoughts are good. I must go into detail about this because I'm not sure some people understand. I knew my depth for understanding writing pieces was good and I was an excellent analyzer. That's why when I was put down for my thoughts I questioned my ability to write well. I became insecure about my writing. This class allowed me to give myself a chance. Step out of my block and allow my mind to go wild.

.In all honesty, I will miss this class. It truly allowed me to grow as a writer. I felt myself grow. The assignments challenged me and told me to adapt. Writers sometimes are so strict with what they write. But now I can confidently say I can write an analysis as well as I can a short story. I think versatility is the main thing I achieved for this class.

I will be forever grateful.

Memoir

For most of my life, I have felt anonymous. Being the youngest in the house of 6, makes you feel invisible. I was constantly living in the shadow of my sisters. But it didn't stop there. My social life was also obsolete. I felt left out in everything I did with anyone. The most I've felt anonymous was during the last two years of high school. But this time it was by choice. I wanted to be isolated, because of how I was feeling, but it didn't mean I wasn't noticing what I was doing. By making myself anonymous I was allowing myself to lose my friends, family. I don't think becoming anonymous by choice is something anyone would want to do. I have never felt more alone during then, and it was me doing it to myself.

I remember when it all started I was 16, in my junior year. My school year started off normal. I liked all my classes, had the most amazing friends. But then it all changed when I was diagnosed with Vomiting Cyclic Syndrome. This was a condition that made me throw up for no reason, it was a syndrome that was present in my genes. There was nothing I could do except stop nausea. As this progressed, it made me want to not attend classes. I missed one day, two days, three, four... I lost track. When I built the courage to go back, I just couldn't. I developed social anxiety. It felt as if one thing didn't end, another started. Because I isolated myself for so long, I didn't know how to interact with anyone. I felt scared of the reaction my teachers would have, even though I had a good excuse. It was just built up and in my head. This ruined my high school experience. I never got to end school the way I wanted.

Because I was feeling this way, I lost my family. More specifically, I lost the relationship I had with them. I would stay out and ignore them. I just didn't believe that anyone could help me. I'm not sure it was personal. I wish I could answer that. My most amazing friends actually turned out to be superficial. After I had disappeared, no one asked if I'm alright. My "Best friend" found another and didn't care enough to keep track of my life. I don't know who I can blame. I am still confused to this day about this period in my life.

Sometimes you don't realize the effect of your actions until it is too late. For me, my isolation made me anonymous. I was watching my friends have accomplishments, get awards, scholarships, I watched them experience their senior year. While I was taking 10 classes a day just to get into the only college that would accept me. I'm grateful for my life but I wish I handled things differently.

Short Story

The year is 3025, there was a girl named Luna (that's me). My family and I, like everyone else, lived on a spaceship. We were millions of lightyears away from Earth. There was a horrible earthquake across the whole world that destroyed everything. Life on the ship was confined. The color of the whole ship, as well as every room, and every nook and cranny was grey. Blegh! Boring old grey. We came on the ship when I was 2 years old. There's classrooms, greenrooms for our food, a cafeteria, there's even a prison. There's also this boy, Kol. Kol is one year older than me but I've had a crush on him since I was 5 years old. I am about to be 18.

There's no specific reason as to why I like Kol. He has always been there for me. There is nothing he can do that will make me mad, or ever make me hate him. He has been there for me since forever. He is extremely kind, which is surprising for how good-looking he is. His being easy on the eyes is just another bonus.

Last year I was heartbroken because Kol decided to take Gemma to the annual dance instead of asking me. The dance the ship holds just marks the end of the school year. If I'm being honest it's the only thing I look forwards to. Before and after the ship is bland. But on the night of the dance, there are lights music decorations. I love it. To be fair, I am invisible to everyone, his sister Olivia is also my best friend. Basically, there can be lots of reasons why he doesn't see me as anything more than his little sister's best friend. This year I thought enough is enough, if he won't do something I will.

Part of our schooling also requires, training. We don't know what we could face one day and we have to prepare. Kol and I have combat training together. I thought this is where I will make my move. During combat training, we ended up sparring with each other. In between punches and throws we talked. Our conversations always just glided. We giggled and laughed. Our sparring ended up being just play fighting. Obviously, we got in trouble with our instructor. Who told us to get get water. I knew it was time. I took a big gulp of water. Just as I'm about to say something, Gemma runs in and hugs Kol. My heart sank. Kol looked into my eyes and his eyebrows furrowed deep into his eyes. I had to get out of there, I couldn't say anything now. I didn't know he still liked Gemma I thought he had gotten over it. I guess it wasn't meant to be.

Later that night, I was going to my room but first I wanted to grab a snack from the cafeteria. Before I could enter, I heard Gemma and her friends whispering. "I can't believe he pushed you off," said one of her minions. "Yeah totally, he's a jerk said the other. Finally, the queen herself spoke, "He told me he loved Luna, that I shouldn't have done that in front of her, and that I had no business running up to him." My brain could not fathom anything being said so I continued to listen as she spoke. She went on to say the only reason she ran up to him was to make me jealous. She knew he had feelings for me. Did everyone know he had feelings for me? This whole time of pining after him, did he also pine after me? With these thoughts, I was already back in my room. Maybe this was a dream, yeah a dream I told myself.

The following morning, dizzy from what I had learned, I was also late for my Plants on Earth 101 class. I got up brushed my teeth and ran out the door. I turned the corner, and I noticed rose petals on the ground. Intrigued, I followed them. Looking down the whole time, the roses stopped. I look up and I see Kol, standing with the most beautiful bouquet. Before I could say anything, he said, "Will you go to the dance with me?".

I think I don't mind being late anymore.

Poem: Summer Realities

The sun rose with such a beautiful crimson light
I reminisce the days where I didn't regret this sight
Let's go get on with the same dreadful routine, alright
Working 9-5 compared to having a day by the pool is not excite

I take one last look at my bed and sigh
Its ruffled sheets and soft and feather pillows cry
I don't want to have responsibilities I just want to testify
Summer as an adult is not something to stand by

When I was young there was so much to do
Running through the green fields at the park without a clue
That when we get older this all goes away without a shoo
We're going to lose these smiles and the ability to come through

Cherish your moments
Hold on tight
Because within a blink of an eye
Summer will be the days you want to rush through

Dialogue

(Saba sends a beautiful picture of her Dad from a wedding to use as his ID picture)

Saba: Is this picture fine for your id pic

Saba: it's the clearest picture I have

(Dad proceeds to send a selfie from his android camera where his face is emotionless and his eyes are closed)

Papa: Use either one

(Saba had no more words for her father because she was in utter shock how for an ID picture her father would think it is acceptable to send an android selfie.)

Saba: Okay

(Saba proceeds to use the picture she sent her father to save her from the hassle of when the ID people ask her to resubmit a picture because it is not sufficient.)

Journals

Saba Chaudhry Journal 2

For most of my life, I have felt anonymous. The first time I ever felt anonymous was at home. I come from a big family, I've got my two parents and my 3 older sisters. I am the youngest. Being the youngest, my opinion is often overlooked. I cannot narrow it down to one moment. There would just be a constant reminder I was. There was no malicious intent on my family's side. As the youngest, they always tried to protect me and for this reason, I was left out of family discussions, felt left out when I didn't understand the jokes they talked about. The age gap between my sisters and me is 5 years and up. So it took a while for me and them to catch up; for me to be able to not be anonymous in their eyes or mine.

Another time in my life I've felt anonymous was during the last two years of high school. But this time it was by choice. I wanted to be isolated, because of how I was feeling, but it didn't mean I wasn't noticing what I was doing. By making myself anonymous I was allowing myself to lose my friends, family. I don't think becoming anonymous by choice is something anyone would want to do. I have never felt more alone during then, and it was me doing it to myself.

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I have thoroughly enjoyed short-story writing. It is incredibly fun. As mentioned before, I tend to have so many ideas, and short story writing has allowed me to indulge deeper in my thoughts. Creative writing has always been a favorite type of writing ever since I was a little girl. But as I got older, my classes stopped teaching creative writing as a topic. Short story writing has also allowed me to connect my own personal experiences to fictional writing. This helps me analyze those moments and allows me to understand my feelings and emotions at the time. It is very self-reflecting and I enjoy it very much.