



Melody of the Stones

By: Valencia Mondesir Williams

Reflection

Writing is a melody of up and down paths that remain for anyone to dance to or die with. I have chosen to dance to the tunes of writing. At the beginning, I struggled to find things to write about. I was very consumed with facts that my creativity seized to exist. I have written over fifty wedding speeches in the past years, yet my writing remained mediocre. With determination and guidance from better writers, I slowly began to produce better story lines resulting in writing that did not need to be facts.

I took a creative writing class winter of 2021, where I got better understanding on how to create fiction stories using my imagination. As the semester moved along, I learn that a story does not need to be told with the narrator's voice only, but I can give a voice to the different characters as well. Writing memoir have shown my strength in writing while poetry is still a challenge. My greatest challenge thus far is writing dialogue because this type of writing is like there are two or more people in your head and they all want to talk at the same time causing a confusion. The fabrication of the sequence of event and the response of the different characters is quite laboring but I do understand the importance of dialogue, how it enhances the story, and keep readers interested.

My first assignment is now my favorite piece because it tells my readers a little about who I am outside of the classroom. At the time when I wrote Meet my kitchen, I was only thinking about a topic that is fun. Never did I thought it was going to be what is it now. Writing Meet My Kitchen was a learning lesson about how a story really develop. Secondly, were the effects of free writing and editing. After the third editing, the story took

shape and the lines began to fit together, hence the reason for saying that writing is a constant process.

Although this class was fun, peer review was one of the least favorite assignments. Students responded late causing backlog on workload. It appeared that in the peer review we did, the cohorts I was assigned to did not offer constructive criticism. Therefore, revising my work became harder, but all was not lost. The feedbacks I received was mostly criticized for a lack of dialogue, which is why I began to pay closer attention as a reader when I read other students work and will continue to do so even after this semester is over.

Before this class I thought that I was a decent writer. I have written numerous birthdays speech and eulogies. I got various invitations because of my way with words of well wishes and public speaking. I was not expecting great challenges in this class but as this semester end, I can look back and see that my expression in authoring short stories is better. I have learned how to draft a story in a third person point of view. I have never written a poem before and in this class thus far I have written four poems. I can now say I have written a portfolio. If someone were to ask me to describe my growth in this class? My answer would be, "I have come a long way from Montgomery to Memphis."

It is surprising to see how I evolve from where my writing skills was before this class and where I am today. I am ending the class with two short stories and four poems. I will continue to write; it may not be for publishing sectors but for the melody of writing.

Memoir

Four sheets of plywood and galvanized made up my small hut where I sold my authentic dishes to help supplement my income from a sewing machine operator job. I had just turn eighteen without a college degree but needed to gain independency from my very strict “Fidel Castro” parents. My hut was gaining momentum as my customers became my billboards. A visitor to my island who happen to have my neighbor as his driver and tour guide brought him to my hut so he can taste local cuisine. Turns out to be one of my biggest sale days. Josh the visitor was from America and asked me if I would like to cook on a bigger sale. We then exchange phone numbers as I tend to other customers. Months went by and suddenly my mom yelled out saying,” there is a foreigner on the phone for you.” I had no idea who it might be, but third world country hospitality got me moving to answer that call. It was Josh calling to notify me that my application for internal work is in process, and he needs additional personal information so it may be complete. Another few months went by and then I was on a flight heading to JFK International Airport.

I was now in a huge kitchen preparing my same dishes while learning new ones. Although I missed my friendly customers the idea of being in America where my hobby became my job was overjoyed but my joy did not last for long. After three years living in America, I received a letter of deportation from United States Citizen and Immigration Services [USCIS]. Although the government agency procrastinates in my residency application, they accused me of working without documentation. Josh who was my sponsor quickly back off and I became an undocumented immigrant at the mercy of the American Government. Alone, scared, and unemployed I got my first babysitter position. Fifty hours work week and twenty-four hours on weekend with a different family to help pay for legal representation. I walked in fear and trepidation every court appointment for I knew not the verdict that could change my life. Four

years later I won my case and the judge offered me the opportunity to become a legal permanent resident of America. In the end, I was in destitute, alone, and tired but I got to stay in America and follow my dreams.

Short Story

It was a Sizzling afternoon, the trees laden with green leaves casting a shadow from the hot sun. The sweat ran down my back, like a river running towards the sea while I wait for Joe. I was to accompany him to a birthday party held for his 5 year old niece Annie. Finally, Joe arrived and we proceeded to the location. A canopy of green leaves stood still like a statue, two picnic tables with pink plastic cloth held in place by a tray of food and a unicorn cake covered with pink and purple flowers. A whisper of Under the Sea playing from a Bluetooth speaker. Some of the kids, nervous to meet new people are holding their parents as if holding on for dear life. Meanwhile the other children are playing in the bouncy castle. Annie was the first one to spot us and announced our presence.

I was cooking hot dogs and hamburger on the grill, when an uninvited man came to sit at one of the tables. The man was wearing an army jacket two sizes too big, blue jeans and sneakers. His long blond hair peeping under his black baseball hat. We all looked in his direction trying to make sense of what brought him to our location. Annie's father Jason, ambles his way across to the man to further investigate. Jason asked the man to leave the area in which the man refused. The man answered, "This is a public place, and I can sit wherever I please." Jason answered "man this is a kids party" the man replied "I love kids party" as he stuck a cigarette between his lips. I could see that Jason was getting heated because his ears and cheeks was red as the strawberries that top the fruit plater on the table. Jason made his second attempt in hopes to have the strange man leave by saying "you are making the kids uncomfortable, just leave" This time the man stood and erected himself inches away from Jason face. Jason said "are you a pedophile, you just love to watch little girls, get the fuck out of here" Those words was barely out of Jason's mouth when the man blew a fog of cigarette smoke into Jason face as he answered " I am only a pedophile when I'm caught"

At that point I know I had to intervene because when it comes to Jason's children he will go to war to protect them. Jason shoved the man away from him. That move quickly escalated to a fist fight between the two men. Joe jumps in to stop the fight while the other parents frantically gather the kids and called 911. The alleged pedophile took off running before the police could assist.

Poem

Meet My Kitchen

The secret path to your heart that have you coming back.

A few steps down a narrow hallway that leads to the kitchen,

I go to the fridge and open the door,

There lay all the colors of the rainbow

Red, yellow, green, sizzle in a cast iron pot,

Awaits to cushion the fish that I got.

Culinary art is a talent I've got.

That allows me through

The secret path of people hearts.

Standing over my pot,

Without measuring ingredients in my thought.

I throw in curry in the garlic to taste,

As the spices comes together in a haste.

My family letting nothing go to waste.

The passion that lays within my heart,

And the love for flavors wrap in art.

Some asked, are you a chef?

Is cooking your future dream?

No, I love to say.

Yet I stand all day and sweat away.

Practice now makes perfect dish

Pasta, jerk, curry fish

Place on the table as my family wish.

Dialogue

Female nicely dress pretending to be busy in the kitchen. Man, dress in baggie clothes sitting at the kitchen table eating a sandwich. There is great passion between the pair, but they are not in a relationship.

Elena

Steve

Elena

Steve

Elena - For someone who say they do not drink alcohol that is a lot of rum on your picture profile

Steve – I do not drink, none of it is mine.

Elena – if you say so. but if you ever need to talk to someone you can always call me.

Steve – why don't you call me

Elena – I do not know where you are or what your schedule is like plus I do not want to upset your wife, since you never introduce us

Steve – oy, why would she get upset? Are you planning to kidnap me?

Elena – you're funny. [pause] well you could have wished me a happy birthday [sounding disappointed]

Steve – shit! [brief pause] sorry, I kept thinking your birthday is the same week of thanksgiving. You know am not good with dates. Anyway, happy birthday [smiling] How does twenty-seven feel?

Elena – My birthday was two weeks ago

Steve – why you took so long to remind me

Elena – why did you remove my birthday on your google calendar? At least google would have reminded you. Plus, I waited long enough to see when you would have remembered.

Steve – girl, I said sorry.

Journal 1

My Unseen Blessing

I meet Madeleine when I was 12 years old. I had just transferred to my middle school which was located 3 miles away from my home. This was a far distance to travel in those days, but my parents thought it was a great opportunity because I was a very smart kid at the time. Every morning I work up at 5.30am to get ready to walk the mile and a half to the highway where I could board a public bus. I left home at 5.45am before it got too hot to make the journey. Two cornrows, one position on the left side of my head and the other on the right, blue ribbons tied to each end of my cornrow. Black shoes, white socks that looks like Scottish men of 17th century that complemented my pleated blue skirt matched with white button-down shirt. My attire was a compulsory uniform. My Jansport backpack weighing almost 15lbs and in my left hand holds my lunch box. Leaving my right hand free to wave to everyone along my way. Every morning as I left for school, I shouted good morning to my neighbors. their dogs would bark at the sight of me skipping and hoping as I slowly make my way down a dirty path. After 15 minutes of walking, I arrived at the first pave road that would later lead me to the highway. I would sometimes get lucky and get ride with people from my district. My island was small, so people knew each and

looked out for the children keeping them safe from dangers. I would make my first stop for a drink of water halfway through my walk, but my favorite spot was under a huge Calabash tree next to Mrs. Toussaint house. A beautiful yellow paint with white trimming, a huge balcony with floors that look like freshly fallen snow embraces the house while taking shelter under the gabled roof. The house stood majestically among the green trees. I seem to always get lost in admiration but will Mrs. Toussaint who always seat in a rocking chair in the balcony call out to me reminding me it's time to get going. " You don't want to be late for school" she would yell. It's now 7am and I've finally gotten to the highway. Minibuses rave in both directions making the street look bigger than it is. I always get to school much easier than the kids who live in the village.

By noon my lunch is so cold that it became difficult to consume on many occasions. Madeline my classmate who lived in the village but had working parents was also sent to school with her lunch. She noticed at lunch time I hardly ate, choose to inquire. I did not want to answer because I was concerns of other kids hearing, so I showed her. The fat from my meat had congeal. Madeleine then offered to share her lunch with me, and she did for a month without me asking. She later asked her mom to allow me to come over at noon so I may heat up my food; But for us to do that, her mom Maggie increase Madeleine's chores in hopes to show that Madeleine is responsible enough to allow us in their home without any adult presence. The favor was later granted, and I eat a hot meal at lunchtime for the next four years. Our friendship continues throughout high school. Due to our residential district, we were parted as we started collage. Madeline and I could not wait for school holidays so we could spend hours on the phone. On my eighteenth birthday she surprised me with a cake she baked at her new boyfriend bakery. As we

grew older our responsibilities kept us apart but always maintain our friendship using any technology available.

Today as adult, I have moved thousands of miles into a whole new continent, but our friendship is still blooming. In 2015 we both married in December and was maid of honor to each other. One year later I became the God mother to Madeleine first born child Sofia. Now I am not just a friend but part of her family as she is of mine.

Journal 2

It was fun writing dialogues, especially when I was allowed to take snapshots of my phone conversation. The knowledge of having a face to my characters enable to create fun plays. It was also easier to create fiction with the snapshots to bring the story alive. Writing Dialogue is the most fun I have had in this class. The most challenging part of writing dialogues is to create a stage scene because most of this conversation took place on a train ride home or sitting somewhere and using it as a dialogue where the characters play the part. This took a great deal of creativity to implement movement in a stagnant conversation and create a play/dialogue where it become alive. The part that was so-so is that most of my phone conversation is brief, very direct, and non-dramatic, therefore, I lacked content to snapshot and later turned into dialogues. The bad part of writing a dialogue is that sometime the voice and word choice to match each character do not come easy, as a result, it took the fun of writing dialogues down a notch.