

Written by Jeffrey Tang

**My Library.**

## Final Reflection:

If there's anything I've learned from this semester, it's that I can be passionate about writing when I'm allowed to be passionate. I was very neutral to the writing opportunities I got in this class, as shown by my Journal 3, but I managed to break out of my shell by Journal 7. This was thanks to this class, but also thanks to the online setting. Being a programmer, an online environment is very comfortable to me. Of the things I've written, there are several pieces I'm particularly proud of, even going so far as to show them to my friends. Although I can't show all of them here, I'll point them out, just for you, to find on my OpenLab. They're the story about the Guardians, the story about the Laboratory, and all of my dialogues + journal 8, which is just a continuation of the dialogues.

If I'm allowed to go on a tangent, and I am because this is my library, I *really* like what I managed to pull together with my dialogues. Despite each of them being in 5 separate posts and scenes, it's possible to combine them into 1 whole story with more details than each individual story has.

That's why I included all of them.

That's right, I included all 5 of them.

You can't stop me; this assignment is already done.

Just like how those dialogues connect together, making smaller works that connect to a larger whole is what I live for. The story about the guardians is actually a game reference in its entirety. Can you find the game? Do you know the game already? Can you find how many specific references I made in that story? I *love* writing things like this, and I love reading things like that just as much. The common thread throughout my reviews on the things I've read this semester is the fact that I dislike when things tell, don't show. There's nothing I despise so much as a book that bloats its word count with meaningless fluff that doesn't do anything for me.

People say time is money, but that's a lie. Time is time, and you can't get more of it. This means when a book packs paragraphs on paragraphs, it's wasting something more valuable than money. That's not to say that it's *impossible* to write something good and long, but that's a hard sell. When I'm reading a book, I want as much content as possible with as little as possible. Just like with any creative work, the artist with the most content doesn't immediately gain the title of "best artist". This is an opinion I'll continue to carry around whenever I'm writing, and this class helped to cement it for me. The assignment that helped cement it the most was those dialogues. That's right, this is a segue back to those dialogues, that's how much I like them.

One thing that I believe to be impossible to see from their final drafts is the creative process I took to make that story happen, and that could be true of any final draft that anybody makes. Unless there's some kind of final reflection, like you're in here, you'll likely never get to ask the writer how exactly they got to where they did. In the case of that dialogue, the connected story was absolutely not my initial plan. The idea actually came from the limitations of the initial assignment.

I had to find messages between me and my friends, and there had to be 4 of them to fictionalize. I don't know about you, but I don't have a lot of conversational messages between me and my friends. If you're someone from my generation, you likely also had this issue because a lot of conversations nowadays aren't exceptional. Conversations online follow a very different convention from meeting in real life because they excel at slang and casual talk. This caused me to create dialogue 1, which "cheats" by having the main character text on their phone in the scene. My initial goal was to make a comedic scene that subverts expectations by making the reader think they sent a harsh text on purpose, followed by the main character saying it's actually auto-correct.

My second dialogue focused on actual conversation, but I still didn't exactly have an idea on where to go with the other 2 dialogues. That is, until I found text messages between me and my friend about the party we went to. They were split between multiple people, but they were all within the same time frame. I literally had a view into multiple perspectives, right in my text messages. And that's when everything started connecting in my head. Dialogues 1, 2, and 3 would become my tools to set up for those text messages I had found. This is the writing process that I latched onto for those 5 dialogues, and it felt great. Like a fitting the pieces for a puzzle back together, knowing what I wanted to do in the long run made the writing in the short run much easier.

This process lends itself to my opinion about writing more with less. By finding the overarching story I wanted to create, I was about to layer details throughout the stories to make each one lean yet... meaty? Meat metaphors aside, I'm sure I'll use this in the future. Being a computer systems major also means I'm on a computer most of the time, so being able to write something worthwhile quickly is valuable. Maybe I won't be writing a real story with myths or legends, but I'll still need some kind of arc to my memos.

"Hey, the printer's drivers are outdated. If you need to print, go to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor instead. I'll fix it by 12 PM today."

That's a story for you, and it's something you might write in a real job. The problem is that the printer's drivers are bunk. The arc is that people need to go somewhere else while I fix it. The resolution comes by 12 PM, when it's fixed. Maybe it's not a great story, but it gets the point across, doesn't it? Maybe I need to add more when the boss questions me. Maybe we should get off the topic of hypothetical printers.

The point is, I like more with less.

Enjoy your time here in my library.

Memoir:

I'll omit most of the details about my friend for the sake of their privacy, but also because it doesn't really matter. Their name, appearance, gender, age, and other such features are extraneous to the type of person they are. The first time we met was through pure chance; I visited a high school because I was forced to "check out" some schools to see if I would like them. While being dragged there by a family member, they met a friend of theirs and started talking. I knew this meant I had an hour to burn before we could move on, so I had to find some way to spend this time. Lacking my usual option to play games, I instead turned to the only other person who looked to be around my age and threw out a probing question to see how they were.

"Hey, what're you doing here?"

"On a tour of the school."

Just like me.

"By choice?"

"No."

Me too.

"Did you have plans today?"

They shrug.

"What're you planning to have as your major?"

"Computer science or systems, I don't remember which."

"How do you forget your major?"

"They both have CS as their acronym."

They put their fingers together, as if showing me how an acronym works.

"You like playing games?"

"Huh?"

"Games, those moving pictures you control."

"Yeah, I play them. What about you?"

Neat, I get to answer a question this time.

I'm sure some people can see it as an awkward beginning, but at the time I didn't really have anything to lose. At worst, I'm forced to stop conversation and I pass out until my escort stops their conversation.

That was... 5, 6 years ago?

Writing about it now, I can't even believe the odds it took for us to meet. Family had to drag us both out, we both had to go to the same high school, and I had to end on a topic we both liked enough to continue talking afterwards. Speaking of talking though, that's basically the glue holding us together. Talking's great, you throw out a question, they throw an answer back. The rhythm behind conversations is nice, but what's nicer is when you find someone that just gets you. You know what I mean? They *get* you. Something about the things they say just make sense in a way that doesn't happen when other people talk. By keeping up this badminton game of words, we eventually just... remained best friends.

As far as I care, they're my number 2, capable of being relied on any day of the week.

Were you expecting a longer story?

Well, there isn't one. There isn't a trilogy to be made here because our dynamic is built on something simple: an indestructible bedrock of trust. There isn't some drama about us betraying one another because we wouldn't. You won't find a dark story about us keeping secrets from one another because there are none.

And honestly? I'm fine with that. Not all stories need to be exciting.

I asked a couple questions and picked up a new friend. That's cool.

Short Story:

Have you ever heard the story with no words?

It's not a story that can be given or taken easily.

Each story-teller has a different tale. The names change. The actions change. The emotions change. But the world... the world is the same.

Six figures, exhausted, walked into a chamber larger than anything they've seen before. It was a cylinder, stretching to what seemed like infinity above them. They each adjusted their armor while staring at the massive tower in the middle of the room.

Guardians.

A classification given to people- no, any being capable of wielding weapons in order to push back a very literal darkness that has come to consume the world they live in. They're constantly outnumbered and outgunned, but they're never outmatched. Moving in a group, the members of this particular group could be called a "raid party". More specifically, these people are named Kai, Zephyr, Illusion, Raven, Matriarch, and Striker. Each of them guardians, and each of them staring at their next target.

A pillar made of the finest marble with sapphire embedded within the cracks. In any other scenario, it would be considered beautiful. But at that moment, they only saw the creature wrapped around the pillar. A twisted beast with claws the size of a house and a face concealed by the hardened skin that grew on it. Its jaw was unhinged at the center, capable of opening up to reveal rows of massive teeth and the abyss within. Tentacle like appendages hung off its neck, writhing around with a razor sharp tip.

One stepped forwards and took aim with a sleek rocket launcher, unique in its origins. It was a vivid pink and had a distinct fox insignia on its side. Despite this childish appearance, pulling the trigger quickly revealed 2 rockets in succession, each initially coming out of the barrel before firing off a second jet to speed at whatever its user locked onto. The first rocket would have a brilliant yellow stream behind it while its twin had an oppressive purple trail.

Lowering the weapon to check his mark, the rockets detonated right on target, the beast's face. However, the shock wave that went over the group barely left an impression on the monster. Not a single movement out of the ordinary, like the rockets didn't fire at all.

“Zephyr, did you actually expect anything to happen?”

“It’s honestly a 50/50 with these things, you never know”

With a quick wave, Zephyr blew off his companion’s question while going to inspect the room. One of his companions walked forwards, raising an arm as if to stab something into the ground. At this moment, a golden spear pointed downwards materialized inside their hand. The top of this spear had an equally golden hexagon holding a shining skull within it. With a smooth motion, this was stabbed into the ground, radiating a glowing light along the floor.

“So, how are we splitting up?”

A generic question was thrown out, and it was answered almost immediately by a distinct voice. This confident voice came from one of the warlocks of the group, holding the golden spear and wearing a blue robe-like chest piece that glowed with the same light that came from the dragon.

“Doesn’t really matter, does it? How about me, Zephyr, and Illusion on one side with Raven, Matriarch, and Striker on the other?”

A consensus sounded among the group as they went to touch the spear before splitting up into their designated sides. When their fingertips touched the spear, any damage to their armor would fade away with a dim glow. This even extended to their empty ammunition stores as a light went across them with more ammunition appearing in its place. This wouldn’t surprise any of them as they continued on their way.

The sides of this room contained glowing platforms, 3 on each side, enough for these improvised teams. As the final member took their place, the platforms started to lower.

This revealed both the room and creature were larger than expected; the room extended far below the floor and the beast did the same. While they descended, doors lit up on their respective sides. As if they were on an unwritten script, these doors immediately caused everyone to leap off towards a single door in particular, the one closest to Zephyr’s group.

The distance to the floor, fatal to most, would prove to be no issue. The confident warlock glided down to the floor, held up by the unknown. Following him, Zephyr mimicked the maneuver. Illusion was a hunter by contrast, falling past both of them before letting out a quick jet from their boots to negate the impact.

On the other side, Matriarch did the same to the sound of 2 titans slamming into the floor. The otherwise quiet descent was interrupted by laughter from the comms.

“That was not my fault, I was timing my jump with Striker”

Half joking, one of the titans picked themselves up quickly before continuing to rush to the door.

“Don’t pin this on me! I wasn’t even awake during the jump”

Their injuries would mean nothing as a light faintly shone off their armor, removing the dents that resulted from the impact.

The short-lived teams, passing the door that had lit up, felt the motion of the same door closing behind them. Now locked onto this path, they continued the operation.

Both sides were mirrors of each other, perhaps by chance or by design. The party would continue through a short winding hallway, reaching a room filled with platforms. These platforms were dim, unlike the ones they rode down here on. Looking out from the hallway, there was a small lookout to the left and a pitch black wall to the right. The lookout was built into the room, sticking out of the floor and into the ceiling. It had a platform one could stand on to look through glass, providing an overview of the room and a straight on view of the black wall.

As quickly as they arrived in the room, strange black voids would appear along with them. These voids would bend and shift light around them as robotic appendages stuck their way out before bringing the entire body through. These robots with skinny, with their only weapon attached to the body. Powered by a vulnerable gel core in its stomach, they would make up for durability in numbers. Each void quickly pulled more robots through along with another, different being. Bulky with limbs like trees, contrasting greatly with the bots, a void taken creature called the



“phalanx” would arrive to defend its comrades. These living tanks had impenetrable shields attached to their arms and would fire rifles from the safety provided behind them.

Faced with this opposition, their response was a simple exchange.

“On your command, Kai?”

“Are you an idiot? Glass them!”

With practiced precision, the crew quickly drew their arms and started firing while evading oncoming attacks. Despite being in 1 big group again, they instinctively split up to clear the room with efficiency. Kai, Zephyr, and Illusion on one side with Raven, Matriarch, and Striker on the other, just like before. They all used similar weapons, a white SMG with a spider on the side. As an enemy goes down, the one who shot it down would seem to get stronger and faster. This was no placebo, this was the Recluse, a specialty weapon made from the heat of combat. Automatons and phalanxes stood no chance against this show of force.

The room was cleared, and everyone reloaded their guns before turning to look at the black wall. The entire wall started to warp and bend, just like the voids that came before. With no fear in their eyes, the split-up teams met up once more in the middle of the room, facing the wall. Their SMGs were put back into their holsters, the majority of which being replaced by much bulkier looking rocket launchers. These weapons had large round metal bulbs at the head of the launcher, where the rocket would normally come out. The bulbs had many holes on the side facing away from the user, and this was a sight that nobody wanted to be at the end of.

As the wall was at its limit, reality seemed to tear as the beast that was once peaceful tore its way into the room. Closer than ever to this monster from the void, Zephyr lit up with the light of the sun before conjuring a sword to stab into the floor. The sword penetrated the cold surface and warmed its surroundings, bringing a very real strength to the group.

The creature roars, opening its split jaw to reveal yet another familiar void inside it. However, this one was different. Instead of bringing something in from beyond, this void would attempt to eliminate the foolish party by changing reality itself.

Either unfazed by the possible threat of death or too deep in the situation to run away, Kai would be the next one to move. A purple energy would go across their body before coalescing in the

palm of their hand. With the same motion one would use to throw a dodgeball, Kai flung out this power in the form of a slow-moving sphere that would destroy anything in its way.

Matriarch and Illusion would follow suit by embodying a familiar solar light before condensing it into a different form. Like they've done a million times in the past, both mirror each others' movements by summoning tens of throwing knives from their hands, thrown in the direction of the monster with a stylish twirl.

Finally, Raven and Striker summon the energy of a lightning storm around themselves, striking their surroundings before launching at their enemy like human rockets. The sound of thunder rings throughout the room as they impact, leaving sparks floating in the air.

The dust still in the air from Kai's nova would not cue the cease fire. As each guardian finished firing off their signature attacks, they would shoulder their launchers for the true final assault. Zephyr's rocket launcher would seem normal compared to the ones his teammates had. On their trigger pull, tens of rockets would come out of the small holes on the front of the sphere, lighting up their surroundings like fireflies. Unlike fireflies, these would quickly find their target by homing onto the void within the monster's mouth like some kind of explosive wasps.

With one final explosion and a crackling in the air, the dust would quickly clear as the beast lets out a roar. The void within its body had been damaged beyond belief in this small window of time, and it was unable to summon up the energy to wipe out the team. It would retreat back into the wall it came out of, with the party hot in pursuit. Quickly holstering the launchers, everyone would run to the only hallway into this room, knowing this fight wasn't over.

Poem:

Title: Sad Cat Poem; Meow

Meow meow meow meow meow.

Purrrr. Stretch.

Meow meow meow.

Purrr. Stretch.

Meow meow.

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Dialogue:

**Dialogue 1:**

*Roland walks out of the train station from the turnstile. He is wearing an unzipped light jacket, leaving the winter cold to catch on his skin. It is nearly midnight, with hardly anybody else in sight. The dirty lights of the station illuminate his surroundings as he goes to the sidewalk to check the streets. After only taking a quick glance in the direction of his home, he pulls out his phone, realizing he got a text.*

UNKNOWN.

Are you home yet?

ROLAND.

Just got off at the station, actually.

*(Roland paces around the entrance of the train station, feeling very full and sluggish, considering whether it's worth walking home or whether he should wait for a late bus.)*

UNKNOWN.

How was the party?

ROLAND.

It's always a fun time with friends around.

*(Making a choice by turning away from the bus station, Roland starts walking home, checking his phone along the way.)*

UNKNOWN.

You could've come home sooner, it's pitch black outside.

ROLAND.

I wouldn't leave my friend hanging like that.

*(Roland's breath is white in the air, and his steps are deliberate. The cold makes him drowsy, but not enough to consider passing out right then and there.)*

UNKNOWN.

Did it end up working out?

ROLAND.

No idea. My psychic powers faltered there.

UNKNOWN.

Very funny. Do you need a ride?

ROLAND.

You're trash.

*(Irritation flashes over Roland's face as he catches what he typed in. He takes a deep breath to catch himself, before typing a follow-up.)*

ROLAND.

Yes, thanks\*.

My bad, auto-correct.

## Dialogue 2:

*It's a chilly day in the office break room. Xiao idles at the coffee machine's table, over-stirring a cup of coffee with clearly no intent to actually drink it any time soon. He wears a suit but has a thousand-yard stare in the direction of the ceiling, defying how professional he should be. Pameli walks in, wearing the same suit as him, but with a confused gaze in his direction.*

PAMELI.

Hey Xiao, are you going to drink that coffee?

XIAO.

Huh?

*(Xiao does a double take at Pameli's words, snapping back into reality to consider what she asked. His eyes scan across the room evasively as he throws out his response.)*

XIAO.

Uh, yeah, probably.

PAMELI.

Might as well have said "no" with such an indecisive answer.

XIAO.

I'm a bit preoccupied with some thoughts.

*(Pameli is sipping her own cup of coffee as Xiao says this, so she nods to indicate him to continue.)*

XIAO.

You think dreams mean anything?

PAMELI.

You mean, if they're your subconscious yelling at you?

XIAO.

Yeah, like that.

PAMELI.

If there is a message, wouldn't you remember it?

XIAO.

Huh?

PAMELI.

If I want to do something, I'll remember that I want to do it. Wouldn't it be the same regardless of your consciousness?

XIAO.

I guess that makes sense, but what's the "sub" in subconscious for if they both let you remember?

*(Pameli shrugs in an exaggerated way, as if he had asked the impossible of her.)*

PAMELI.

Not an English major, so I wouldn't know. What was your dream about?

XIAO.

Sorry, classified information.

*(Xiao stops stirring his coffee and takes a big chug of it before walking to the sink to pour the rest out.)*

PAMELI.

Wait, even after I gave you such good information?

XIAO.

I'll get you dinner or something.

PAMELI.

You'd rather buy me dinner?!

*(As Xiao walks out of the break room, he raises his hand in a casual wave while giving a weak shout to one of his coworkers.)*

XIAO.

Yo, Roland!

### Dialogue 3:

*It is the end of the day on a Friday. Angela and Roland are seated on a couch, half sitting and half laying down. A TV show is playing in the background, but Roland is more focused on his phone. They're both wearing casual wear with the heater turned up to keep the room warm.*

ANGELA.

So that's the bad guy?

ROLAND.

Uh no, he's a good guy who looks bad.

ANGELA.

Is that a spoiler?

ROLAND.

Nope, he just looks evil. I'm saving you the trouble being confused.

*(Angela scruffs her face up in thought, trying to piece together the implications of what Roland said in relation to the show.)*

ANGELA.

I don't think this show makes sense.

ROLAND.

It gets better in the second season; you just need the backstory.

ANGELA.

Can't you tell me the backstory?

*(Roland doesn't respond for a bit as he browses through various plastic cups on his phone.)*

ROLAND.

Nah. I'm not a storyteller.

ANGELA.

What're you checking?

ROLAND.

I'm on *party cup* duty.

*(Putting emphasis on the phrase "party cup", he flashes his phone screen to show off the variety of plastic cups he's found.)*

ANGELA.

Absolutely incredible. Aren't you going to bring food?

ROLAND.

They're going to have too much food, it always happens.



ANGELA.

It's a nice courtesy though.

ROLAND.

You want to come and help eat some of it?

*(Angela feigns ignorance for a small bit by staring intently at the screen before responding.)*

ANGELA.

Nah, you have fun.

ROLAND.

That's the plan.

*(Roland puts away his phone as they both turn their attention to the show, with Angela throwing out questions as Roland answers them.)*

#### **Dialogue 4:**

*It's a weekend day, but the streets are mostly empty because of the winter chill. Roland walks along the street, with a bag under his arm. The day had just started, but he was as awake as ever. Just before reaching the end of the street, Roland turns to face one of the houses. He pulls out his phone, calling someone.*

ROLAND.

I'm here, open up.

UNKNOWN.

Actually here or "I want you to have the door open by the time I get there" here?

ROLAND.

You have to open the door either way, open up.

UNKNOWN.

Got it, just give me a bit.

*(Roland exhales, watching his breath in the cold air. The door cracks open, revealing Xiao in the doorway.)*

XIAO.

You're here so early, come in!

ROLAND.

I walk very fast.

*(With a smile and chuckle, Xiao walks back into the house while Roland follows. After taking off his shoes, Roland continues further into the living room of the home where Pamela is also waiting.)*

ROLAND.

Oh, you're here too?

PAMELI.

Xiao said he would buy me dinner, but apparently, he's making it instead. What a liar, right?

ROLAND.

You definitely got duped there, I'd ask for a refund.

*(Shouting from another nearby room, Xiao chimes in.)*

XIAO.

I can hear you!

ROLAND.

I know you can!

PAMELI.  
Angela didn't want to come?

ROLAND.  
Way too cold for her liking, I wouldn't want to force it.

PAMELI.  
That's a shame.

*(Roland empties his bag of plastic cups on a nearby table before walking into the kitchen where Xiao is.)*

ROLAND.  
Hey.

*(Xiao jolts with a startle, too engrossed in cooking to have noticed Roland at first.)*

XIAO.  
Gah, we need to put a bell on you.

ROLAND.  
Never mind me, have you asked her out yet?

XIAO.  
Keep it down, I'm working on it.

ROLAND.  
To her heart through the stomach?

XIAO.  
Yup, that's the plan.

ROLAND.  
You got this; I'm cheering for you.

*(Roland pats Xiao on the back a couple of times before returning to the living room. Without turning away from his cooking, Xiao returns a couple of head nods.)*

## Dialogue 5/Journal #8:

*It's a warm summer day. Around a square wooden table, 4 people are seated. While Xiao and Pameli occupy their own sides, the third side has a pair of 2 people: Angela and Roland. At the center of the table are small piles of coins, acting as makeshift poker chips for the game being played. The air conditioner hums in the background, doing its best to chill the room.*

ROLAND.

You can't just keep staying silent, that's not a solution.

ANGELA.

So you want me to lie instead?

ROLAND.

Yes, please.

XIAO.

I'm with Angela on this one, lying's way worse.

PAMELI.

I'm also with Xiao with Angela on this one.

ROLAND.

You two stay out of this, I don't need a gang against me.

ANGELA.

It's still lying though.

ROLAND.

It's a white lie, better than the alternative!

ANGELA.

White lies are still lies, that's why they have "lie" in their name.

*(Xiao chuckles at the exchange while Pameli goes to get water, sensing this might take a while.)*

ROLAND.

If you stay silent, people will inevitably find out because you're terrible at staying silent.

ANGELA.

How could I be terrible at saying nothing?

ROLAND.

Your version of staying silent writes the words on your face instead.

ANGELA.

I've got an amazing poker face.

*(Pameli returns with cups of water for herself and Xiao. With only a quick glance at her cards and then at Angela, she relaxes back into her seat.)*

PAMELI.

Angela's poker face is incredible.

ANGELA.

I think you're the one giving away my cards right now.

ROLAND.

Dear lord, please just lie instead! Any sort of mind game rather than your poker face!

XIAO.

Roland, I think you're acting weird just because she's using your money.

ROLAND.

This is the thanks I get for trusting my own partner...

*(Angela puts her coins in as well. They flip their cards. Angela is on the losing side again as Pameli cheers at their victory.)*

Journals:

**Journal #3:**

Writing memoirs has been very neutral to me. I've lived enough of a life to accept that not everything is notable and the most fun I've had have been in moments that I can't even begin to express to another person through text. I'm sure a more experienced writer could chalk this up to me not knowing enough words, but there's a deeper issue here. Personally, I've filed away all these moments already and going back to them just doesn't feel like it's worthwhile enough to go in depth with it. That's why I have a gimmick with these journals and memoirs, I think it's the only fun way to write them for myself and for the reader.

It's unreasonable for me to spend five thousand words to properly frame a moment of my life that I like, but it's much more reasonable to throw five hundred to a thousand words onto a screen for a fun lesson or story. This isn't just about me either. I've been a student, and I've graded papers for teachers, and you can feel when someone's writing about something they don't care about. I still pass them because they don't deserve to get a zero for not caring about a subject, that's just how it is sometimes. However, I don't want to be the guy who writes a long but meaningless story for the grade while students in my class have to read through paragraphs and paragraphs of worthless drivel.

I don't love the experience, I don't hate it, I just am.

## **Journal #7:**

I've never liked poetry writing.

Even past my hate for writing (the action, not the field) and the arts (the field, not the action), poetry rates real low.

This is because I personally don't like putting meaning onto things that might not have that meaning. Of course, it's subjective what you think this or that means in a poem, but not when you're in a class for it. When you have poetry as a class, you can be objectively graded for something subjective. No matter how correct you might be in the literal sense (as in, your accuracy to the poem writer's intentions), you could potentially get a bad grade for lack of effort.

Who are we to say a poem means anything at all? Poetry always has this pretentious air that also lingers around psychics, the stench of someone lying to you through their teeth with vague meanings and indirect statements. No matter how simplistic or convoluted or direct a sentence is, it could have an infinite amount of meanings that other people will never understand in a million years.

Maybe the argument against that is "Well maybe it's your fault for writing something vague"; in that case, why do poems have to be analyzed when for the majority of them, we don't have an author's account for what it literally means? If the goal is to become better analysts for poems, there should be some kind of objective bar to reach.

This is all coming from someone who combs through video game lore to find tiny tidbits of information to weave entire stories out of, but I'm not graded on that. The school experience with nearly everything based in creativity has ironically decreased my appreciation for any of it. For god's sake, there are art classes and art colleges; you can get a literal degree for something based in subjectivity.

There's a reason art majors are the butt of so many school jokes, and it's because the school system is trying to objectify art. I know artists that dropped out of college because they decided that they didn't want to pay thousands of dollars for a chance to sit in a class, all while a teacher derides their every effort. Past that, I know even more artists that gave up the craft entirely because college turned their passion into busywork.

The further you search, the deeper my connections go; they document every kind of artist you could possibly find. All this and I can confidently say I hate poetry and I hate it for the poets. Poetry is art, and we will never know how many people like Van Gogh or Michelangelo the system has killed because they feel the same way as I do: absolutely loathing every moment I'm forced to say what someone else's work means.

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Besides that, this class is neat.

I think the grades are lenient enough to actually let creative people be creative.