

A CHAPBOOK FOR ENG 1141

ROME WASN'T BUILT IN A DAY
SO WASNT MY WRITING SKILLS

An illustration of a crowd of people holding colorful umbrellas in the rain. The umbrellas are in various colors including red, yellow, purple, blue, and maroon. The people are depicted in a stylized, flat manner. The background is dark with small white dots representing rain or stars.

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Final reflection

When signing up for my classes for the spring 2021 semester, I was already burned out and depressed by my college experience. I started college in the Fall of 2020 when lockdowns were still in full effect. To this day I still haven't even seen my campus, and I've been attending these online classes for nearly a full year. The continuous awakening at 8am to get out of my bed to go to my chair 10 feet away to turn on my computer and sit just to hear my Professor lecture us was quite depressing. You could tell that most professors tried their best to keep the class energetic, but how can you when your class is mostly filled with untalkative blank rectangles that have their names. I had absolutely no excitement for most of the work because it was mostly just solo busy work and the disconnect I felt when I was "surrounded" by my peers felt just as hollow because I couldn't put a face to their voice or put a face to their texts. My college experience took a pretty steep dive down as time went on. When I saw the elective class "Creative Writing 1141", I wasn't very excited because my college experience was already muddled. When I decided to research the class and the professor, it gave me some hope. The professor was rated very highly on [ratemyprofessors.com](https://www.ratemyprofessors.com), and the reviews people gave made her sound very energetic and positive. With many of the reviews having that she's awesome and very funny. Coming to her class and attending nearly a full semester, all of that was true and she helped me bring out my creative side of thoughts and writing that I have never done myself before.

As a computer science major, the major is extremely based on mathematics so writing wasn't exactly the biggest thing for me to care about. But it still mattered and I wasn't the best at it in terms of my written work not being as appealing or exciting. Creative writing taught me how to add depth into my writing to add that little pizzazz needed to keep the reader interested. Learning perspectives, settings, and the best uses of literary elements improved my writing a whole lot more. My first writing piece, "Meet my computer", was overall decent but not enough. There wasn't enough depth, it was very flat and just something I came up with in under half an hour. My short story about the meth induced war hero was a better and stronger piece. This time I added a third-person perspective, improved on the setting so that readers could picture his journey, and added fictional elements such as his meth hallucinations to keep the reader on their toes somewhat. Revising my work also gave me a chance to improve upon what I was missing because with the help of my peers and professors I could understand what I was lacking in. For my Point of View story for Pic A, Zaire Lancaster commented, "Amazing narrative direction Rakib, I liked the character's relatable background and the effort put in to give her a past and a future. I can relate to being a child but a guardian being allergic to a certain type of animal so you can't get one. Unfortunately, I never made a Robo-dog but I can definitely imagine a child wanting one of those. All in all, it was a great story, not just because you thoroughly analyzed the image but also didn't let what was in the image limit you." The comment gave me a real confidence boost in my writing and I just loved his energy in the comment. I especially found it hilarious that he

wrote “I never made a Robo-dog but I can definitely imagine a child wanting one of those.”

I’ve always been a bad reader because my overall attention span has shrunk as the years of technology have been ever so prevalent in my life. Throughout the course I was able to somewhat improve my reading skills by taking down small notes and re-reading the text to get a better idea. I also love the idea of my peers commenting on other peers' written pieces because it helps me understand if my take on the text was either wrong or right. Additionally, seeing others and their perspectives helps with filling in any blanks I had for the text. Luckily most of the text we read this semester was interesting and captivating enough for me to not doze off after five minutes. I was especially attentive to “Pendeja, You Ain’t Steinbeck: My Bronca with Fake-Ass Social Justice Literature”, it was the first piece of text I read that didn’t have a filter and was filled with a person's adamant emotions on race. It was different, and it was an enjoyable read.

The creative writing course also gave me the passion and energy back into my college experience. With a very energetic, positive, and understanding professor my college experience changed for the better, it no longer feels like as much of a drag compared to my first semester. The constant group work with my cohorts made me feel less alone and that I actually had people in my class. I didn’t really adapt to online classes but this class helped me ease the feeling of being alone. The course did help me overcome my writing from being so bland and boring to being a joyful experience to

read my work. I will use what I learned to make me a better writer and continue using these tactics to improve my writing.

Memoir

I have stayed anonymous by choice for a while when it came to anything related to the internet. I do have social media and use other online platforms but I don't post at all. I take precautions when I do anything from using VPNs to using virtual machines to make sure anything I visit or download doesn't have a virus or malware. I understand the various cyber security risks there are so I left a minimal "virtual footprint" to protect myself and others in my household from any cyber attacks. In real life, I'm more social and love being with my friends and others.

Short story

During 1944 the Finnish government was working with the Germans before they learned the horrible atrocities they carried out. Aimo Koivunen was a Finnish soldier on a ski patrol looking out for Russians for the Germans. He and his patrol went on for miles without rest and slowly became fatigued. They were ambushed when they decided to camp and needed to escape, Koivunen was drifting to sleep so he decided to take one Pervitin, which is meth. Meth at the time was used to help with fatigue and gave a boost of energy. While escaping, Koivunen struggled to get one pill so he grabbed a handful of 30 pills of meth and swallowed them. They were able to escape. Now it's time for his two week journey where he's stuck on the Russian countryside hallucinating because he swallowed 30 pills of meth.

His patrol takes notice and dis-arms him just in-case he starts attacking them while on this meth high. He wanders off camp and is now alone, cold, and now a way of protecting himself. He ends up hallucinating a lot of things and his sense of reality is beyond altered because when he saw a Russian out-post he decided to ski right through it while being shot at. Luckily a storm came in covering his escape, then by a miracle his squad found him and started skiing back to camp. Then he wakes up alone in the middle of the russian mountain with damaged pots, supplies, and other items. The russian cold is getting to him, good thing he spots an abandoned cabin. He starts a fire to warm up some snow to drink, then falls asleep. He wakes up to russian soldiers with flamethrowers, he narrowly escapes again. Then he wakes up, realizing he started the fire in the middle of the cabin instead of the fireplace and hallucinated the russian soldiers. With minimal supplies he stumbles to a german outpost and steps on a landmine. He wakes up, this time it's not a hallucination and he's missing a limb. He decides to take refuge in the building later to be blown up again. He lost all his hope of survival and gave up. He noticed a plane and tried his best to signal it. They took and a group of Finnish soldiers came to rescue them. He woke up... but it was in a hospital bed surrounded by doctors and family. Koivunen was rescued and learned that he was on his own for two weeks, malnourished, and delirious. Luckily he lived and had a good life until he died at the ripe age of 71 in 1981.

Poetry

The Defender Poem

As society crumbled away
Defenders rose among the lands taken
People no longer felt like a stray
The defenders took back the lands forsaken
Hope gave people power
Hope gave people time
The Defenders protected those who cower
The Defenders were in their prime
They will prevail above darkness
One day they will be united
The light shines on god's creations with a warm brightness
God himself would be delighted

Dialogue

[Rakib wakes to see a snap o his phone from his friend]

Ellerby: You coming on?

Rakib: It's 5 in the morning...

Ellerby: You said 10 am.

Rakib: I said 10 am est

Ellerby: You sure?

[Slightly annoyed]

Rakib: Yes, bruv go get you tea and crumpets in 2 hours bruv.

Ellerby: Slag off.

[Rakib goes back to bed]

Journals

Journal 1

I found my best friend on a gaming community forum. We have been good friends for 3 years and we continue to keep our bond stronger as time goes on.

Three years ago I used to play this game called *Overwatch* on the Playstation 4. My friends I played with usually played other games so I was usually playing the game by myself. I sometimes joined the gaming forums to play with, one day I met Faaris. We instantly were good friends and we became really good at the game playing as duos, consistently going into high tier ranks. We would joke around a lot and became very good friends. After having a random conversation we shared, we found out that we lived only a bus ride away from each other. We decided to meet up with a couple of our other friends as well, and that was possibly the best time I had. We would always hang out when we could with our other friends and it was always a good time. Recently, we and a couple other friends went to Prospect Zoo in Brooklyn and had a great time.

I grew up an only child and didn't have another family here in the states, having someone like Faaris filled the void of having a sibling, because honest to Allah he is like a brother to me. We're always there for each other and will continue to be. I'm glad that joining a random chat party has caused me to find a good friend like Faaris.

Journal 5

A moment that changed my life was in 2006 when my uncle bought a computer as a housewarming gift. I was always a curious person and wanted to know how things worked to produce a certain outcome, the computer was a curious thing for me to learn. I always wondered how it was possible to play games on a screen and how quick the response was. At my fingertips I could watch videos, video chat with my family across the world, and play flash games. Ever since then I wanted to learn this enigmatic piece of hardware and how it was basically another world I could look through. I would go online to read how the internet works, how computers are built, and overall how the future was being virtualized. I was able to take apart my family computer and put it back like nothing happened. Flash forward I built my own computer and am now pursuing a computer science major.