Creative Writing

Spring 2021

Final Portfolio

Professor Jessica Penner

An unexpected defining experience



Eamon Bolger

Final Reflection

the 2021 Spring semester has been a very interesting semester for me, both in terms of school life and my personal experience as a writer. With covid-19 still being a worldwide problem and having to attend college from home, the way I have always had to write has changed for me in some ways. These changes have Definity also been thanks to the creative writing course that I had taken this semester. I have learned a lot about myself and the way I write this semester and a lot of that is thanks to the creative writing course. As a mechanical engineer my writing ability is not always seen as the highest priority in the field. So, I have never seen it as the most important aspect of my college life. In the Major I am so used to having to follow precise equations and algorithms to get an exact answer, that I can get tunnel visioned by the routine like ways that I do my work. Taking creative writing has given me a lot of freedom that I do not have in my major, which is a fresh breath of air in my college experience.

Comparing my earlier work to my more recent work in this semester is a bit difficult in my opinion because I feel like it is hard to improve greatly over the period of a single semester of school. I did feel many things in this class helped me realize tactics that help make my writing seem more alive and help give a better read. Comparing my “meet my … “piece, to my second short story helps me see a lot of improvement in my work over the semester. In the “Meet my” piece, while I was getting the point across in explaining my bike and its story, it was very one dimensional only really talking about the bike and not adding much detail to enhance the story, compared to my second short story, where I learned about a multitude of things that improve my writing, such as attention to setting and both first and third person perspectives, which helped me cultivate a stronger writing piece.

Throughout the semester we were given many assignments that helped me practice my skills as a writer. Out of all the work we did, I think my favorite assignment was the poetry assignment. I have always been a huge fan of poetry ever since early school English classes, so being given an assignment that gave me the option to write four poems of my choice was something that I looked forward to. Writing the poems was actually very fun and I almost did not consider it as homework and more of an enjoyable pass time. On the other hand, my least favorite assignment was probably the more recent dialogues assignment. While some interesting conversations came from them, I did not really like going into my messages and writing those for all people to see. I also found it weird using myself as the character compared to someone else.

While this is a creative writing class, I have also realized how much I have learned as a reader thanks to this class. I always thought that while reading and writing were similar, they did not really tie into one another. Taking creative writing has helped me crush that shallow way of thinking through some of the assignments such as the read and respond assignments which helped me see that by reading another writer’s work, you can learn about your own writing. Things such as style and setting that professional writers have used helped me, by trying to incorporate similar things into my own writing and seeing the difference it would make. I have also learned to look for key things while I am reading compared to reading just to read. Things such as plot, character development and setting are very important when trying to critique someone else’s work, so I feel like those assignments helped me with honing that skill.

I feel like Covid-19 was a big change for everyone, with the temporary end of in class environments and the introduction of mainstream online learning. Even though it was very difficult to get use to at first, I feel like online learning has become an effective way to learn within the safety of our homes. When it comes to creative writing, I feel as if the online scenario makes it both easier and difficult in some ways compared to if we were in a classroom environment. In terms of getting overall work done and submitting my work, I feel like it has been much easier as I can do my classwork and submit it from the comfort of my own home. I feel like creative writing is not as demanding nor as difficult as some math and science classes, because in some sense you are able to learn it on your own easier than in learning complicated math formulas. Where creative writing becomes more difficult due to online learning is in feedback and reviews from my peers. I feel like if we were in a classroom, it would have been so much easier to give feedback and understand feedback because the person is there giving you their thoughts on what they thought of your work. In an online environment that does not happen, you are just given typed feedback which can feel less human.

Taking the creative writing course has been a great experience for me. It has given me a lot of insight on what I need to become a better writer and reader in the long run of both my college experience and for later in life. At first when I decided to take this class, I only considered taking it because I had thought that it would be an easy A, as I’m taking this course as an elective, but going through the course I have found out that it was very fun to write with a free style compared to very restrictive writing. Thank you, Professor Penner, for helping me realize how enjoyable writing can be, and thank you for accompanying me on this journey into writing!

Memoir – Meet My Bike

Living in New York City has so many benefits when it comes to transportation. Things like buses and trains are so commonplace here that it makes any place in NYC easily accessible, which is a luxury that some places in the U.S just do not have. My favorite mode of transportation is a bit more manual though, and that would be my bicycle.

I have been using my bike ever since I was around 14, it was a gift from my father that had been his bike when he worked as a bike messenger in his twenties.

Although it is not in the best condition and can be considered a beater bike, my bike has taken me all over New York and has given me a lot of experience that I would not have gotten if I had taken the bus or train. My favorite experience with my bike was riding over the Marine Park Bridge every morning on my way to high school. It was a great way to start the day with the wind against my face and a great view of the Bay, instead of being in a cramped and stuffy morning bus. I intend to keep my bike forever, so I can make more enjoyable memories using it to go wherever I desire!

It can be very dangerous at times when traveling on bike, especially in the city where there are many cars that could hit me. But with the right knowledge of the city and a keen eye for your surroundings it can be easier to know if there are cars nearby. It is also smart to take bike paths and side streets, as there are less cars on the road. I do usually wear a helmet, but sometimes I do not wear if I know the bike path, I am taking has danger no cars and I should not be in any harm.

Short Story - Short Stories 1(Revised)

Fifteen-year-old Johnny-boy and Stevie were always seen as the neighborhood geeks, the kids that were always bullied and pushed around. While most of the boys from their school were in sports clubs or telling stories about the girls they had gotten with or had planned to get with, Johnny-boy and Stevie were absolutely obsessed with the idea of extraterrestrial life forms, or in regular people’s tongue, aliens. Every day, after school Johnny-boy and Stevie, would rush to Stevie’s house and go to the garage, which at the time was their hideout, Since Stevie’s mom’s car did not run anyways so she never really used the garage. In that garage was a treasure trove of anything remotely alien-related. Posters of aliens and old alien horror movies filled the walls, Lego Star Wars ships and model spaceships filled the shelves if anyone was a true fanatic it was these two boys. They would sit in their “Jabba the Hutt” bean bag chairs and talk about alien sightings and conspiracy theories until nightfall. Even though many of the kids from Joseph F. Lamb Highschool thought of the boys as weird, they did not care. They had each other, even though they would never say that to anybody out of fear of being called gay by the school jocks.

Johnny-boy and Stevie had known each other ever since second grade, and with the luckiness of being in the same class every year of middle school, they ended up becoming good friends. While Johnny had always been the nerd at heart, hanging out every day of every summer gave plenty of time for Stevie to take a liking to every one of his best friend’s interests. One night, as the boys were ranting on whether Area 51 had aliens or not, they heard a large whistle through the neighborhood followed by a loud crash. Despite the magnitude of the sound the car alarms and neighborhood dogs did not seem to react and in general, the neighborhood was quieter the before. It was as if Johnny-boy and Stevie were the only two people that had heard it. Hell-bent on finding aliens, the boys rushed over to the field to see what had caused the noise, purple smoke was rising from where the crash happened as if the cosmos were leaking from the crash. As the boys peered over the crash, they saw a large black cube that seemed unscathed from the crash inscription of a language they never had seen before was written all over the cube.

Fearlessly and high on the thoughts of seeing aliens, Johnny-boy reached out to touch the cube. As his finger touched the cube a large flash of light engulfed the boys as if they had triggered something. Suddenly Johnny-boy awoken, passed out in the garage in the bed of his mother’s truck shocked by what he just witnessed. Was it a dream he thought? But as he peered down at his body, he saw the inscriptions that were on the cubed etched all over his body, as he frantically jumped out of the truck’s back, he saw Stevie passed out, with the same symbols all over his body as well. A scream of terror let out of Johnny-boy’s mouth and Stevie woke up somewhat dazed. When Stevie noticed the terror in his best friend’s eyes, he started frantically looking around to see what had happened. As they both were in a panic a strange voice echoed around the room calling for them. It was a deep and shrill voice, causing a shiver down the boy’s spines. “If you wish to leave this dimension alive you must pass a test that proves you worthy of the mark”. The boys both looked at each other and grinned. While most normal people would be in shock Johnny-boy and Stevie’s nerdiness had them oddly prepared for a situation like this, they even had a name for it, “operation Ultimate Alien Test of Courage”. Brimming with confidence Stevie asked,” We Accept! what is the test that we will be taking?”.

Not a second after his response large drone-like sound echoes throughout the room and two swords appeared as if it was out of thin air.” Fight to the Death, the survival will be granted a great power”. Then a grim shadowy creature appeared in front of the boys, its dark black scaley skin and galaxy color eyes loomed over the two boys. They both looked at each other with pale looks and picked up the swords, walking to either side of the garage. As they locked eyes, they both had the same idea. They both lunged at each other with the look of a hungry predator ready to kill. As they were running, they both smirked and changed direction stabbing the strange creature that had dared to tell the boys to kill their best friend. An alien-like howl left the creature’s body as it disappeared in a black smog from seemingly nowhere. Suddenly the words began to float off the boy’s skin as if it were alive. Fading away shortly after it had become airborne. They were back home, and they knew that they were safe from whatever creature had offered them. While power would have been an awesome thing, they both knew they would never choose that power over their own best friend. Later that night the boys got snacks and ranted on about what powers they would have gotten and how they could have totally kicked each other’s asses.

**Poetry- The Stages of Slug Denial**

What even is a slug?

is it even a bug?

When I drop it in salt?

It begins to malt.

They tell me to halt.

but is it even my fault?

What is a slug?

It cannot be a bug.

But they call me a thug.

When I did it in salt

ITS NOT MY FAULT!

What is a slug?

It is not a bug.

**Dialogue – Dialogue 2**

(\*sitting at the lunch table, the noise of conversations fills the room)

Greg: There is a guy who beat the game in 2hrs only using a lightning spell.

(\*A surprised face appeared on Eamon’s face)

Eamon: Jesus

Eamon: I watched a guy beat the whole game with a shitty ass broken sword as a joke.

Eamon: They nerfed spells in this game to

Greg: The lightning stake?

Eamon: Yeah, spells in general

Eamon: In old dark souls one it was super op.

Eamon: You could like 4 shot any boss.

Greg: I am a cleric/ pyromancer which is pretty good for completing the game.

Greg: Vordt is harder than cinder.

Greg: Shit he has a second form.

Eamon: Second form is hard.

(\*Eamon gives Greg a weird look)

Eamon: Vordt was the 2nd boss what are you on about.

Eamon: He was easy.

Greg: Vordt is the hardest boss in the game.

(\*Eamon laughs)

Eamon: Yeah sure, whatever man.

**Journals**

***Journal 1-***

When I was choosing my Highschool back in 8th grade I had Initially picked a school that had what I liked, while also being somewhat close to my home. Although I thought this was an ideal plan, I had ended up moving to a different neighborhood that summer making my travel to school much longer. I had decided to stay in the high school I had initially picked because I liked it a lot but now had to take 3 different buses for a 2-hour journey both ways, which took time getting used to. Eventually, I got used to the travel and had realized that someone from my school was also taking the same long route to school I was which has surprised me that I was not the only one who went to a school so far away. Both I and he had noticed that we went to the same school, so we ended up talking with each other and became good friends. I personally found our friendship to be super lucky, as by some stroke of luck, even though we both lived far from school we had the same bus routes, same interests, and same sense of humor and became great friends that still talk regularly. They are important to me because they were one of my first friends in high school and someone who I can relate to and have fun with, and that is not something that comes along very often.

***Journal 5-***

During my freshmen year of high school, I had a very simple routine when it came to going and coming home from school. I had an hour and a half bus ride to and from school, so I had usually just stuck to going home directly after school was finished, that way I had time to unwind and get homework done before it was due. I would usually leave immediately after that last bell rang to catch the first train because it would always help me catch all the other buses much faster. While I did enjoy the extra time to relax when I came home from work, my father was pushing me to try and get into a club or get a hobby at school that would take up some of the free that I had from coming straight home from school. My father ended up going to one of my school's afterschool activity seminars and saw that the robotics club was looking for new members. When he told me about it at first, I was on the fence about it because I had gotten really used to the routine that I was doing for the previous few months, but I decided to go to the club anyways. After I joined, I really was enjoying myself and ironically ended up staying way past school hours almost every day. Going to that club really changed me by helping me find friends that I am still close to today, travel to new places in the states that I had never been to before and ended up helping me pick my major going into mechanical engineering which in my opinion was a major change in my life, as it changed the direction of what career I wanted to pursue in life.