

**Live,
Love,
Laugh,
& Most Importantly Pass.**



WHAT'S THE DEAL, WITH ALL THESE EMAILS ?

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-A Creative Writing Chapbook answering your questions and entertaining you one last time.

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Final Reflection

Writing:

This semester I learned that I am a momentum or exponential writer. Like the graph of an exponential curve, once I get an idea, it starts multiplying uncontrollable and leads me into many tangents. In all seriousness, whenever I start writing I feel I have writer's block, but after I write the first sentence ideas rush in. Even when writing this, I have these 20 minute spurts of continuous writing which I come back to later and correct. I learned I enjoyed the drive of writing and to enjoy communicating your ideas to people who may or may not share the opinion.

Though being a momentum writer is amazing for deadlines whether it be work or school, it's disheartening to not be able to get in the door let alone open it. Unfortunately, the mental crash from momentum writing is exhausting. As I write this I jumped from the first paragraph to the 2nd question, wrote a page, took a break, and then came back only to make a new 1st paragraph and make this the 2nd paragraph. Between all of that, I found myself walking around 2-3am on the day it's due listening to music and even doing random exercises. It seems like a bad habit that stems from procrastination but the results speak for themselves, just look at that smile on your face as you read this.

4th wall breaks aside, starting to write or “getting in the door” used to be a big problem whenever I tackled non-fictional pieces or anything creative but this semester I learned that a few “pre-writing” strategies can help me with different pieces. However it would be a bit dishonest to say I learned these things this semester, it was definitely reinforced through repeated practice.

The last thing I learned about myself as a writer is that I learned to appreciate the creative writing (genius pun, I agree) and creative process this class allowed me to have. I enjoy using a few jokes in my pieces or ingenious puns in genius places(wow, not even on purpose). I understand that I won't always be able to add quips and such due to my work due to professional environments, so I learned to be grateful now to the readers who put up with the corny jokes, thank you.

Reading:

As a reader, this semester reinforced my critical attitude when it comes to expectations regarding quality content. Whether it is putting more effort in or expecting more out, I find myself surprised at the amount of effort or lack thereof that people put in. Thankfully I was put into a group with others also serious about their grade, but between random groups and other classes, it makes me wonder why they are here.

If you come into a situation not putting your best foot forward, what's the point. If you're not gonna try at all, what's the purpose of only wasting your time but others as well. Sure, it's just one class towards a larger goal of a degree, and I shouldn't take it this serious but at least be upfront about it. If you don't want to speak in our break-out rooms or contribute to the project let me or the professor know. Personally I would prefer honesty instead of waiting for a response to no avail and every group activity sounding like a bad stand up routine.

On the other hand, everyone has their own things to deal with in their lives. Some are working from home with multiple family members and are unable to find a productive and quiet environment. While others are taking classes from work and supporting their families or self, and like expressed earlier this class is not the "end-all be-all". At the end of the day unless it's directly affecting me, I shouldn't complain because it's their decision.

Nagging aside I found myself enjoying the various forms of literature this semester. I was exposed to many powerful artists representing underwhelming minorities and found it enlightening to hear about their daily lives. From their hardships to their desires and driving forces, every part has been interesting. In the past, present and maybe even in the future there have been, and maybe will be many injustices committed. If we as people cannot overcome differences and create discourse about that then there will be no growth. There have been many topics that have been hidden away from the eyes of the public, shunned to talk about in a civil manner, or even pushed to the side because it wasn't recent but we need to discuss and handle these issues before we reach the last straw.

Foreseeing:

Two things I will be able to take out of this class and into other writing situations is to not take yourself too seriously and that quantity is not always quality.

Not taking yourself too seriously can be used in many aspects of life but for writing situations, it is important to not be too critical of yourself. No piece has to be perfect, there can be as many drafts and iterations as time allows, it doesn't have to be great on the first attempt. Sometimes people find themselves stressing on a report or assignment and end up with a worse product than if they took a deep breath and stepped back to refresh their mind. I know the importance of writing strategies and planning techniques so I'll be sure to use those along with other techniques. Personally I believe it is always beneficial to let your writing sit as you develop new ideas and potentially change old ones, so if time allows I'll draft and maybe even peer review.

The argument of quality vs quantity can only be used when you reach the minimum for certain works but beyond that, I am reminded that a lot of something isn't always the best.

One specific example of this is the poetry section. When I was mimicking the poet's style I was also trying to match their exact length or quantity but had trouble getting my ideas across. After spending a few hours trying, I quit and committed to my ideas while respecting their format. This incident convinced me to have more confidence in my writing and not try to compare it to others. Instead, I always try to stay true to the message I want to convey, while maintaining quality. In the end I was proud of my result, and even though my poems were shorter or longer than others, I knew it was quality work.

Clarifying:

- How would you compare/contrast work done early on in the semester to now?

As the semester progressed I began to add more humor to my pieces making it fun to create and hopefully entertaining to whoever reads them.

- What was your favorite/least favorite assignment and why?

My favorite assignment was the dialogues because I could adapt my texts into hilarious situations. My least favorite assignment was the poetry, it was difficult to combine the author's style while staying true to my creative instinct.

- What are some notable lessons that have stuck with you after completing certain assignments?

The most important lesson that stuck with is not something new but was something that was reinforced time and time again, time management.

- What changed in your writing (and reading and thinking) as the genres changed?

As the genres changed I found myself including more emotion in my work. Writing wise, I just wanted the reader to get more invested and enjoy my work. My reading and thinking didn't change as the genres changed, I just found what worked for me and ran with it.

- What were your early assumptions/beliefs about yourself and writing? Have they since changed? Explain.

My early beliefs about myself was that I was a hard and capable worker. My early beliefs about my writing was that when I put my mind to it, I could adapt to various genres while bringing quantity and quality content. Neither of these beliefs have changed.

- What was your experience revising assignments?

It was a fine experience revising assignments, I have experience doing this in other courses and highschool so I felt well versed in the task.

- Was there any peer feedback that stands out to you and why?

Not particularly, I enjoyed all comments and suggestions especially those outside my cohort group.

- How did you adapt to an online writing class? What were the challenges, if any?

I changed my sleep schedule to sleep most of the daylight time and do my assignment during the night hours. There were no challenges, however I found myself getting bored, unable to play sports for over a year.

- What was particularly challenging for you in our course this semester and how did you overcome it (or attempt to)?

Thankfully I didn't have anything particularly challenging, I managed my time and got the majority of my work done the day it was assigned(except the final reflection).

Thank you for reading, here are a few of my favorites for your reading pleasure.

Memoir:

Though I cannot recall a time where I felt anonymous, there are a few key occasions where I was anonymous by choice. In high school, to get our elective credits we have a period in which half of the year we have gym and the other half would be health, music, computer class or a free period for 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th graders respectively. In the spring of eleventh grade, I transferred from my computer class to gym. Previously I'd be in a group of younger kids so we would never have dibs on the court but now since I was older it was our time to play whatever we wanted. Others chose basketball and I was picked as a tall guy that looked good. Unfortunately, looks can be deceiving, I wasn't good, but that game piqued my interest.

After becoming interested in basketball, to even be semi-competitive, I knew I had to practice. To improve my skills I would wake up early on the weekend and shoot around for a few hours before playing with and against many different people allowing me to learn and act immediately. Throughout my four years of playing, I got to know a guy we'll call Q.

Q spends most of his free time at the park playing basketball and watching his two younger siblings, one boy, and one girl respectively. The girl was a mischievous tomboy, always getting people with water balloons or water guns and running away in a giggling spree. The boy being the youngest was always attached to the hip of his older brother like a joey in a pouch. When Q wasn't playing basketball he taught his brother and the younger kids how to play. Everyone he plays with knows his name and he theirs, even making nicknames up for them, everyone but me. Somehow over four-plus years, Q stills does not know my name. Funny enough, this isn't done on purpose, it may just be a reflection of my demeanor. When I'm outside, I'm serious, always watchful and ready. Ready to handle any situation. In a professional environment I sprinkle in the occasional small talk to lighten the mood but basketball is different. When playing basketball I cut the small talk and watch every motion, every decision, and even every made or missed basket on the court. I turn into a cyborg with 110% focus, learning by the second and improving just by watching.

To refrain from confusing themselves, others have taken it upon themselves to give me a few nicknames based on my attire. They range from “Marine” because I wore a marine shirt, to “Glass” because of my sports goggles, to even “Grey” for (you guessed it), me wearing grey. As the nicknames began to pile on, I realized few knew my name and even fewer had a creative gene. Though it didn’t bother me, it reminded me of something. I call them friends but these were strangers, people I have met that happened to share a common interest. They're nice people but whether or not I became friendly with them would not change my life, I could just be anonymous with a different nickname everyday. The anonymity didn’t bother me either, I came to play, get a workout, then leave, and I did that. My name would neither help nor hinder the process, I could be a glasses-wearing, grey-suited marine, and I’ll still play hard and play to win.

I like the name given to me because it's unique and was an actual place, making it special. The lack of caring if others know it comes from a combination of being raised to be private and my J.R.O.T.C days in high school where we all refer to each other by our last names to practice professional etiquette. It is something that stuck with me and though I don't go by my last name to strangers, me not using my first name is something that I may keep doing, gathering hundreds of uncreative nicknames through the years.

Short Story :

In the middle of the Amazon jungle, south of the equator, what seems like the normal rumblings of nature veil a silent conflict. A battle turned stalemate changed due to the efforts of one anxious soldier. But, for all the hostility in the jungle, they could never do away with their true enemy, the sun. Directly overhead at all times, the sun knew of its effect and shined harder to their torment. Whether it was the hellish temperatures or the effects of a stalemate, tensions rose and one soldier was fed up.

Private Ryan had enough, enough of oven-like heat, enough of his yellow-belly commander, and most importantly, enough of the enemy hiding like a bunch of cowards. Ryan was ready to be a war hero but looking back on his first day, he was already let down. The video game soldiers he admired from the safety of his couch were non-existent. Instead of war hungry, fire eating warriors, Ryan was met with infantry and medics. Surely this could not be what he signed up for, where was the violence, the bullets flying overhead, the war cries, and the energy. When he signed up, he imagined warzones with dogfights overhead or battles in half-destroyed cities like his video games but not this, anything but this waste of time, resources, and Ryan's youth. Ryan wanted action so he gritted his teeth and asked to be sent to the frontlines lying about his combat training from his hunter father who in reality was an accountant.

Much to Ryan's surprise, his request was granted due to piling casualties and he was set to leave in an hour with a supply truck. No more was he going to waste his time hiding in the back resupplying, he was going to tackle the problem head on like a real man. But when Ryan arrived he was angered once again. This wasn't a battlefield, this was a camp-out. A single older soldier in encampment reviewing a map, no action anywhere. Holding in his anger he asked "What's going on?". The truck driver responded "A stalemate, both sides are too afraid to make a move". "But shouldn't we be fighting, don't we want to catch them when they least expect it?" Ryan asked. "Yeah kid, good luck with that by

yourself” the driver remarked, laughing as he drove off. Ryan was tricked again, how many times would he be let down, all he wanted was some action.

Alone in this sentiment but not alone in this stalemate, Ryan was joined by his Commanding Officer (c.o.) Captain AJ and fellow soldier Private First Class Kay. The antithesis of Ryan, Captain AJ is a cold and calculating individual who would rather his enemies make a mistake instead of running about like a headless chicken. Due to his careful nature Captain AJ was called many things throughout his career, always criticized for his passive ways yet he was used to it. He stayed consistent and had one of the highest success rates among commanding officers. He knew as long as the unit listened to him everything would stay under his control and would pan out.

Also unlike Ryan, Private First Class Kay was a woman of few words. Direct and result-oriented like her c.o., Kay was a sniper who kept radio silent, hid her position, and watched her squad’s backs. Being a sniper Kay was used to long non-active periods in battles and had no issue with the passiveness of their Captain making Ryan the odd one out.

Yet, amid the rising temperature and tensions, the catalyst wasn’t a surprise attack or the local fauna, it was Captain AJ, Ryan’s commander, seeing the discontent on his face. Being the cautious individual he was, he knew he had to stop Ryan before he did something brash. So AJ told Ryan to relax but little did he know he just turned up the heat.

Ryan didn’t take kindly to cowardly old men telling him what to do especially if they had never seen any action themselves and told off, stunning Captain AJ. He was tired of the heat, tired of the wait, and most of all, tired of the overly cautious attitude by their so-called commander. Ryan, feeling justified, complained getting louder and louder causing Kay to get on the radio and tell him to “SHUT IT!”. However Ryan didn’t care, he kept going, gathering momentum and confidence he knew it was his time to strike. With the sun behind him and his c.o. taken aback by his lack of control on his unit he grabbed his equipment and dashed into the jungle.

The first few steps were freedom, after emptying his rage Ryan was bird soaring free. Ryan finally felt the call of duty. But amidst a warzone, the still survive longer. Less than 30 feet away from his unit, Ryan was shot down by the enemy sniper. The commotion he caused had let them know of his location, Kay was too distracted to see the scopes glare and the sun had tricked him. It wasn't a justification to leave, it was a blinder.

Blinding himself in a fury of emotion and blinding him from what really mattered, getting home alive. Ryan wished for a miracle to save his life. But nothing happened, the jungle stayed still as ever, the shot even stopping the swaying leaves. Yet in his final moments, something good did happen, for the first time since arriving, Ryan began to cool down.

Poetry:

Blue

Blue is the color of the watching sky, is a field where the animals graze.

Always around but never there.

A color stuck in place in the depths of emotion.

Blue is stagnant, taking up time but leaving you with too much space.

Powder and turquoise, blue comes in many forms,

not enough but almost there, sapphire tears of sadness,

the weight of the ocean like a steel blue. Blue is a deep color but

blue isn't always sad. So be ready. For blue is music,

a tone and though it appears still, blue is alive and it's electric.

Dialogue :

(Lights Brighten)

(Curtains Rise)

A couple is enjoying a relaxing beach outing day under the sun.

A man is next to a woman.

(The man begins to ask a question)

???: Hey Jane?

Jane(Raising her eyebrow): Yes Alex?

Alex: Why are ghosts bad liars?

Jane(Under her breath, with a look of discontent): ...Not this again.

Alex(Excitedly): Because you can see right through them.

Jane(Stares at Alex with a blank face)

Alex(sheepishly grins)

(Divorce attorney enters the right stage)

(Lights dim)

(Papers can be heard shuffling as a man weeps)

(Curtains close)

Journals:

Journal 1

I don't have any friendships that have been significant to me. I appreciate my friends and the time I spent with them; however, nothing significant has come out of it. Even the times I spent around various friends groups and friends wouldn't be significant because it was always downtime between things. This lack of "significant" friendships may come from no long time friends and zero effort spent attempting to keep in touch.

Besides not keeping in touch, I don't have long time friends because whenever I changed schools, from elementary to middle, middle to high and even high to college, there have been a max 8 people I have known. For high school especially this was true as no one from my middle school came with me.

Though friends I haven't known for a while could be significant, I struggle to think of any interaction that I could deem significant with friends I have known for a short time.

Even subconsciously, any time I interacted with a friend I didn't believe that was a turning point in our relationship or an important day in my life.

I may be undervaluing everyday interactions between friends but if those didn't happen, it would make or break my day, class or year. After some thought, though it may seem critical I can say with 100% certainty remembering every school year up to now that I never had a friendship that was notable, extraordinary or even impressive.

Journal 7:

The Good:

The poem writing experience was refreshing. I have not read a poem in about a year, so it was nice to visit some classics and favorites. In my personal time, I read the occasional manga and manhwa but poems are far and few between so the difference in structure and purpose is appreciated. When writing, I found myself able to rhyme steadily which gives me my yearly confidence boost of being a mumble rapper if this computer science stuff doesn't work out. Besides that, I enjoyed finding connections between ideas and looking to find ways to inexplicitly state them.

The So-So:

I had trouble coming up with ideas. I know we were supposed to match an author's voice and style but I didn't want to mirror a piece too much and end up plagiarizing. Length requirements were not specified and kept me wondering if I did too much or too little. Luckily enough, towards the deadline, I found a mid-point that satisfied me.

The Bad:

Historically, poetry was never my strong suit as there are fewer details than a story, which makes it easier to misunderstand your message.

