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How I've Grown as a Writer - Autobiography

I remember the earliest instance of my writing in early elementary school. My preschool teachers and the daycare workers would give me paper to write and draw on and they would staple them together and help me make little booklets for me. Starting out, I usually would just draw either a bunch of scribbles on a piece of paper or drawing a house. Fascinating, I know. It was probably around kindergarten or first grade that I would make little booklets by myself in my free time, without the help of an adult. These little booklets were still pretty basic, still mostly just basic drawings, but this is when I started incorporating words and stories into them. I loved writing these little stories, even if my stories were incoherent and only made sense to my 5-year-old mind. Oftentimes, I would get computer paper and fold them in half and staple them together. This was how I would make my books. To me, these booklets were works of art, and I was incredibly proud of them. So proud, in fact, that I would often try to give them to my elementary school librarian to add to the libraries catalog only to have her tell me that she can't accept them as it isn't a real book (to my increasing disappointment). I didn't like that librarian that much.

As I grew older, I started to read less of books like *The Giving Tree* and *The Wide Mouthed Frog*, and I started reading books like *Captain Underpants*, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, and Dan Gutman's *My Weird School* series. One thing I noticed when reading these books was that all the illustrations were printed in black and white. This really irked me as a kid as I thought if

somebody were to make a chapter book with colored illustrations, they would become super rich and be able to buy mansions and boats and the like (I had no real conception of how money worked at this age). So, I attempted to make my own colored chapter book. I made a small booklet, drew pictures to go with the story and I colored them all in. My memory of this is hazy, but I'm pretty sure I titled it "The World's First Ever Colored-In Chapter Book!". I had known that I wanted to be an author ever since I tried getting my librarian to put my little booklets into the library catalog. My attempt with the colored chapter book didn't go far however, and I quickly gave up on it as soon as I got bored. This would continue throughout my early elementary life. I would continue to write basic stories in my classes and I really enjoyed it.

Towards third, fourth, and fifth grade, I moved on from the books that had pictures in them, to ones that didn't. I started to really get into the *Percy Jackson* and *Harry Potter* series and I was a huge fan of both when I was a little kid. I was so much of a fan of these book series, that it heavily influenced by writing for school. At that age I wasn't a fast writer and the stories I wrote about were always way too big in scope for an 8-year-old to realistically finish for a school deadline. This became a problem for me as I remember a teacher yelling at me for taking too long writing a story about the different Greek gods in the *Percy Jackson* books.

The amount of reading I was doing at this time was extensive. I read so many books that my parents decided to buy me a Nook. Back then tablets were still relatively new and one of the two big reading tablet brands was the Nook by Barnes and Noble. I had a habit of destroying the physical books I read as I was incredibly unorganized and was terrible to my books. The Nook was great as I could read any book I wanted without risking the destruction of an expensive twenty dollar book or having to pay library fines to pay for damages. The Nook was great for a while, until I found out I could use the internet on it. As I grew older, I found myself reading

less and watching YouTube on my Nook more often. I grew further and further away from reading which in turn pushed me further and further away from writing. Writing was still present in my life; however it was still subconscious in my mind.

In middle school I was prevented from being able to buy things on my Nook. My mom found out I spent three hundred dollars on random apps and comic books, and I wasn't allowed to buy anything anymore on it without expressed permission from my parents. So going into middle school I really didn't read a lot on my Nook. I still read books at my library from time to time, but it was a lot more infrequent. I even spent sixty dollars at my middle school book fair once (I was terrible with money growing up). I started gaining more access to technology and the internet as this was around the time I got a phone, and my focus started shifting closer and closer to that. This really messed with my attention span, and I was pushed further and further away from reading and writing. I got really into space at that time and my school district was starting to push students towards a STEM career path. I was enamored by STEM and I thought it would be really cool to become an engineer or a rocket scientist and work at NASA or something like that. However, STEM sucks. I am good at math but after a certain point, it becomes gibberish to me and I can't understand any of it. I scored poorly in many of my STEM classes from eighth grade all the way up to tenth grade. By the time I was in ninth grade I realized that STEM was not for me, and I tried dropping an engineering class for tenth grade, but it was too late to change it and I was stuck with it.

The catalyst for my decision to follow a different career path was, interestingly, because of ninth grade health class. In the class we had an assignment where we needed to make a video PSA about the dangers of STD's. It was a goofy video, but I fell in love with the video editing and the process of making video content. school project where I made a short commercial. After

this project I fell in love with video editing. After I worked on the project, I abandoned all ideas of going into a STEM career. Video editing and film productions were something that I was good at in school. I worked on many video productions in High School, and they were decently good. Looking back on it now, I realized that I probably liked video production because it allowed me to write stories again, albeit in a different medium than with pen and paper.

My love for video production carried over into college as I tried to follow a career path in video production. But with Covid running rampant, it made all classes for students online. I came into college in the Fall of 2020. I did terribly in school my first semester of Freshman year. I always had a bit of difficulty in school growing up because of my ADHD but being locked in a room with the choice of going on a PS4 or a Zoom meeting, nine times out of ten I would choose the PS4. Because all of the film classes I took were online, it caused me to quickly become disinterested in it. So, in the Spring of my Freshman year I changed my major from English – Film Studies to English – BSE.

I had always loved teaching as I once worked at a Boy Scout camp where I would teach kids how to sail. Around the time that I switched majors, I realized that my love for video production stemmed from my love for reading and writing and video production stemmed from that. Script writing was always a major part of my love for video production, and this helped me realize that I had loved writing all along. As my time in college continued, I wrote many essays and papers. One of the classes I took required me to write a series of poems for my final project. I really enjoy writing poems and can remember a time in junior year of high school where I wrote a very intricately written poem in Spanish class. I hated that Spanish class and my teacher did not like teaching our class either. She grew so apathetic towards our class that people would openly cheat on her tests and she would not care. So every day was a slog to get through her

class. I basically had 45 minutes a day where I had to pretend like I was paying attention, but in actuality I wrote a poem to entertain myself. That was the start of my love for poetry writing. When I realized I wanted to shift my major towards English and writing, I started to write poetry more often. The poetry assignment for my college English class helped to foster that love for poetry and writing, and shortly after, I bought a leather journal where I could write poems and short stories. I still write in that journal to this day, although the frequency in which I write in it is determined by how much time I have and if I am busy with other schoolwork.

I found that writing was therapeutic for me. I had grown incredibly anxious in college, and I realized that I could leave many of my problems on the page. At the behest of my father, I submitted some of my writing to the New Yorker to get published. I know it probably won't get accepted and published by them, but my father kept nagging at me saying, "you won't ever know unless they say no." I now write as much as I can outside of college assignments. I am currently writing the framework for a fantasy story set in the fictional world that I created in the leather journal I had bought. Practically every story or creative writing piece I have written has been written in that journal.

I write a lot for different college classes. For midterms this semester I wrote four different essays, and I have eight essays for my finals. It can be cumbersome writing so much, but I have grown a lot as a writer in college and the more I write, I find the better I get at it. I get annoyed with the idea of writing so many essays sometimes but it's honestly not that hard once you get the framework down for the essay. My goal for the future is to be an English teacher and to have at least something published before I die. I can be self-conscious about my writing sometimes as I don't ever want to come across as pretentious or as a bad writer. Some of my goals for the near future with writing is rejuvenating the George Street Press next semester.

Some of my English department friends got together at the English department party this year and decided to try and get the club started up again. I was lucky enough to have Kim McCollum-Clark back me up in trying to get an internship started for the George Street Press and I am probably going to be a president or a co-president for this club. My growth with English and with reading and writing has grown a lot as I've grown up. I love to read and write and I am looking forward to my future career in English, whether it only be a teacher or if I became wildly successful with my poetry or other works I may publish.