

Journal



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Moore, Lorrie. "How to Become a " Moore, Lorrie. Self-Help. New York: Vintage, 2007. 1016-1021. s Commentary " First, try to be something, anything, else. A movie star/astronaut. A movie star/missionary. A movie star/kindergarten teacher. Early critical disillusionment is necessary so that at fifteen you can write long haiku sequences about thwarted desire.... It is pond, a cherry blossom, a wind brushing against sparrow wing leaving for mountain. Count the syllables (1016).

Moore begins the story with paradoxical instructions which are mocking the writing profession hilariously as she acknowledges the progression involved in writing, so that in the story she can inform her readers that writers do not just come about with contents fully-formed from their heads or someone else, but inborn. This bare feeling is enhanced by short, austere sentences which contrast the more extravagant role of a movie star.

" She is tough and practical. She has a son in Vietnam and a husband who may be having an affair. She believes in wearing brown because it hides spots" (236-7).

The syntax of this passage highlights the fact that despite of her being tough and practical, she still faces challenging circumstances, especially given that she feels betrayed by her husband due to the affair. The parallel structure and repetition which all begin with " She" stresses her despair, loneliness, pain and suffering as the two people she considers important to her life are not there for her.

" Explain, yes she did, that you promised.....Oh marvelous, they will exclaim.

Try to smile proudly.

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As a child psychology major, you have some electives. You've always liked birds. Sign up for something called "The Ornithological Field Trip". It meets Tuesdays and Thursdays at two" (1017).

By placing "Try to smile proudly" in its own paragraph, Moore emphasizes the importance of her to rise above her present predicament and focus on the opportunity she has, and this establishes her as the primary focus of the story, as the paragraph marks the transition from her description of the babysitting jobs so as to compare it with being a child psychologists.

"Why write? Where does writing come from? These are questions to ask you. They are like: Where does dust come from? Or Why is there war? Or: If there's a God, then why is my brother now a cripple?" (1019).

The purpose of these rhetorical questions is not to obtain a response, but to assert the implicitly. They serve the subtle means of insinuating the notion of why the author wants the readers to be writers, and which might be challenged by the readers when asserted directly.

"...it will be about monomania and the fish-eat-fish world of life insurance in Rochester, New York. The first line will be "Call me Fishmeal" and it will feature a menopausal suburban husband named Richard, who because he is so depressed all the times is called "Mopey Dick" by his witty wife...Lets go out and get a big beer"(1019).

This passage underscores Moore's sense of humor and it accentuates some chilling, private revelations that give rise to goose bumps. The two characters discloses some amusing things, however when the reader pays some really close attention to what the characters feel, it then brings out Moore passionate writing.

".... writers are merely open, helpless texts with no real understanding of

what they have written and therefore must half believe anything and everything that is said to them” (1020).

The syntax of this passage creates a form tension concerning the authenticity of writers' works. Moore seems to insinuate that writers are generalists with no real field of expertise, other than extremely aroused wisdom of punctuation. Furthermore, the verbs vividly express Moore's attitude towards writers as being akin to compartments of mind.

“.... but you have a calling, an urge a delusion, an unfortunate habit. You have, as your mother would say, fallen in with a bad crowd” (1019).

This passage emphasizes that, not just any person can be a writer, but one has to labor in order to turn him or herself into a writer. Even though this semi-autobiographical nature of Francie is meant to compel her to write, Moore in this passage acknowledges that it is not just the delusional habit that one has to work at developing his or her writing skills, but that writing is inborn. However, the ironic bit is that the condition for becoming a writer is to typically inside one heart.

“ Perhaps you should stick with this mistake. Perhaps your creative writing is not all that bad. Perhaps it is fate. Perhaps this is what your dad meant when he said, ‘ Its the age of computers, Francie, and it's the age of computers” (1017-1018).

The repetition of “ Perhaps” reinforces the idea that, even though Francie is ostensibly given instructional essay regarding how to become a writer like Moore, none of these processes are things neither Francie nor the readers can actually perform. Setting this short sentence apart in its own paragraph reinforces its impact, stressing the point that writing is intuitive. It also elaborates on the fictionalized account of Francie experiences in an episodic

or disjointed manner, nevertheless in an engaging way. This leaves the audience wondering what elements are accurate.

“ You spend too much time slouched and demoralized... but you continue writing. The only happiness you have is writing something new, in the middle of the night, armpits damp, heart pounding, something no one has yet seen. You have only those brief, fragile, untested moments of exhilaration when you know: you are a genius” (1018-1019).

The phrasing “ You are said to be self-mutilating and losing weight, but you continue writing”, reflects Francie resilience that despite her disjointed life she feels compelled to take on writing, since she has already survived all of her untested moments in her life and writing cannot be hard for her.

““ Sooner or later you have a finished manuscript more or less. People look at it in a vaguely troubled sort of way and say, 'Ill bet becoming a writer was always a fantasy of yours, wasnt it?' Your lips dry to salt. Say that of all the fantasies possible in the world, you cant imagine being a writer even making the top 20” (1021).

The idea of this connection between Moore and Francie is repeated numerous times all over the story. However, its notable irony is that, Moore asserts that Francie feels that she failed at becoming a writer even though to the rest of the world she excels. In particular, Francie feels her failure originates from her personal self-doubt. Thus, Moore effectively reveals the writing procedure with lack of details so as not to critic her audience.