

Once upon a time assignment

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Once upon a time Writing does not happen like it does in fiction, with inspirational background music, and a sudden appearance of a beautiful Greek muse. “ Writing is easy. You only need to stare at a blank piece of paper until drops of blood form on your forehead. ” (Gene Fowler). People do not sit for hours in front of a computer screen, fighting with a word-processor’s grammar, because it is fun.

Writing can be either worse than the fires from Dante’s famous inferno or more lovely than true love, but, in either case, often a needed explosion of brain cells. For me, forming meaning from what started out as inscriptions on cave walls is more than creating art or a little need, but essential. It is not only what I do. Writing is my identity. Delving into my fresh idea for my novel this summer, I found a book that told me how to write a novel in a month.

Even though I did not in fact write half a novel in a month, several things the author said still are a large part of my everyday writing experience. An exercise he suggested the reader do was to sit down with some background music (I chose Sun Dance: Summer Solstice), and write for fifteen minutes about something always wanted/wished for in our own life. What I did write is surprisingly personal to me, but I will say that even now reading it will still shock me; I had no clue that I had the feelings that I did bottled up inside.

I remember the only conscious thought I had during the entire writing burst was “ hmm... I guess I kinda would like...” Then I finished writing and my soul was peeking at me between the scrawls on the scrap paper I had decided to use for this useless looking exercise. Eighth grade was the year

that I decided: I would write a novel, I would have it published, and I would be famous. I still have the handwritten original twenty or so pages I wrote five years ago. However, my novel has taken on a completely new basic plot as a freshman in college.

I had teachers who taught me how to write using the amazingly in-depth grammar available to me, and I had teachers who taught me about life itself, and that is what my novel is now about: life (using parapsychology to give it a supernatural mood). My favorite teacher in up through high school my best friend's mom, referred to as either Mom or Mrs. Thompson. She was my tenth grade honors comp-lit teacher, my humanities one and two teacher, and she was my advanced placement literature instructor senior year. She scared me. Still does usually.

Her grading was not what terrified my senior class, or her “ Look” (although that was rather effective when done at the right moment), but rather, her disappointment. When I wrote something horrible in Mrs. Thompson's class I did not care what the number written on the bottom was All I cared about was actually whether she liked it or not, and whether I had her time had been wasted in the end or not. The books we read in my literature class were not assignments; they were gifts from Mrs. Thompson. Read well-written novels that spoke morals? YES!

Reading for classes and for fun in free time made me appreciate the novel at a young age. My mother still loves to tell people that I was reading the Harry Potter books by J. K. Rowling when I was in second grade and reading adult level books in middle school. Personally, I am surprised that I did not decide

earlier in my life than the last year in my middle school that writing a novel would be a good idea. What actually surprises me most is what has helped me most with my actual writing: a website. Goodreads. com has a spot where one can search for quotes from authors and famous people and I have always enjoyed reading quotes.

When I began reading quotes from Stephen King, however, I began to improve all my writing, not just my little novel. Not that I have actually read any of his stories myself. Only his quotes and his book *On Writing*, which discusses his own writing advice and experience. It has been enough to make him one of my favorite author role models. He makes me laugh, feel inspired, and most importantly, he makes me get off my writer's block by telling me simply, " you can, you should, and if you're brave enough to start, you will. Too many books on writing tell the aspiring writers who read them to let inspiration come to them, but that is nothing like any writing realistically works. " You [cannot] wait for inspiration. You have to go after it with a club" (Jack London). Writing a paper that delves into the rhetoric of *Heart of Darkness* by Conrad will not be affected much by inspiration, and writing a poem on the beauty of a tree should bypass conscious inspiration if done correctly. Writing, to me, is saying what I cannot always handle thinking, or rather, my thoughts draining from my brain nto a page without passing my conscious go. For years, journaling was to me as numbers are to an accountant: no longer exciting, but it was what I did. Writing in a journal became almost an obligation to tell the invisible person inside the pages the important things happening in my life. Suddenly, in high school, writing developed a completely different meaning in my world, the change

beginning with the mystical quality of poetry. The first poem I wrote for my ninth grade honors comp-lit class assignment shocked me with its intensity.

We were each given a list of twenty words, and were to choose ten to have in our individual poems, and focus a theme on. It was not the last poem I wrote. Now when I write a poem, journal, or work on my novel, doing so is not an obligation, doing so could often be considered enlightening by the insight I will often get inside of my own mind. When I picture a poet, I either see my friend Juliana leaning over a tiny notebook in class or Emily Dickenson, sitting by a window, closed off from the world. A novelist?

A gray bearded man typing away at an old-fashioned typewriter. Yet here I am, lying on my carpet in my dorm room with a laptop, listening to show tunes and Pandora Radio, and I consider myself in the same league. My goal? “ Writing isn’t about making money, getting famous..., or making friends. In the end, it is about enriching the lives of those who will read your work, and enriching your own life, as well. It is about getting up, getting well, and getting over. Getting happy, okay? Getting happy” (Stephan King).