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 *Words of Tears*

I vividly remember coming home after school with excitement all over my face. The teacher had given us a new book to read that week; *The adventures of Tom Sawyer*. As soon as I arrived home, I got my black board, gathered my stuffed animals and started reading the book out loud as if they were my students. This became my first hobby. I remember reading that book with the right intonation and asking questions on it, even though I knew I was the only one who could answer them in that room full of imagination.

My grandpa has introduced me to the power of books. He engraved in my head that “*Every book you read opens a window towards success*”. I have always seen my grandfather as my idol. Since young I was determined to be like him when I grew up. And so, every time he would grab a book, I would too. Soon I realized that reading had become an escape from boredom and monotony. Reading expanded my imagination, horizon, mentality and eventually inspired me to write. I found it intriguing that some words would rhyme with other words and so I started matching them and then their meaning. I started writing poems because I liked singing them to my family. From poems to diaries and then short essays is how I started my writing journey.

It seemed so easy to let the imagination flow and just write. It seemed so therapeutic to let my thoughts and emotions run in paper. It came naturally to sit down and start the day with “*Dear Diary…*”. The more I wrote the more I discovered myself. Subconsciously I was having a conversation with myself, through writing. It was easier to sit down and write what was on my mind, at least easier than talking about it. That way I thought things twice and I made sure to express everything sincerely and thoroughly.

I had always related writing with imagination, good thoughts, pieces of evidence to support a claim, or opinions. However, last year I came to face the abundant amount of pain and tears a piece of blank paper could hold. Somebody really important to me died and I was asked to write something close to a eulogy because everyone knew that I was the writer and these people had praised me my whole life by saying how beautiful my words were. But nothing came. The paper seemed longer and whiter than normal. My eyes uncontrollably started blocking my view because of the amount of tears they were holding. I just couldn’t find the words. It didn’t matter that I had to write it in my native tongue, I simply lost my words. I couldn’t even use the common excuse that “it had to be written in another language and so I couldn’t find the right words”, to comfort myself. And so that eulogy haunted me for months. It was the heaviest assignment I had to write even though it was way past its due date. One that probably no one would read. One that wouldn’t be graded, and that had no time or page limit anymore. I stopped writing for a while because I had convinced myself that I had lost my words. I was determined that I couldn’t skip this paper and I knew that the only way to write again was to write this eulogy.

I would try every day to sit down and write anything that had to do with my loss or even my pain. However, the idea of facing a blank paper scared me. Not because it made me nervous about what I was going to write but because the person I lost was everything but a blank white paper. I was angry at myself about the fact that I couldn’t find the words to describe him and his colorful personality. My heart was full of mixed emotions and my mind full of memories and flashes of his smile. It was impossible to put everything he was in paper and so I decided to fill this blank paper with the words “*I miss you*”. And so, the next day when I sat down to write I wasn’t scared of facing a blank, white paper again. One week later I was able to finish the eulogy and this is the first time I say this out loud as I type. Everyone, including my parents, think that to me the eulogy became an impossible task to complete, and I would like to keep it that way, for there is nothing I can write to ease their pain.

This literacy experience has been dreadful and heartbreaking, useful and insightful. Writing the eulogy and going through several emotional breakdowns while having a writer's block, prepared me for any kind of similar future situations I might experience with writing. Whether I’m assigned to write about a topic that doesn't inspire me or I’m going through another writer’s block, I now know how to get myself to write with passion again. It only takes one word. A word that doesn’t always have to do with the topic; rather than me and my emotional state. Writing about my feelings will inspire me to write more, no matter the topic.

I have come to realize that growing up isn’t measured by how tall one gets over the years but it is measured by experiences and struggles that make one stronger. Growing in literacy and writing seems to be the same. For as long as I grow and experience life with its ups and downs and for as long as I’m not scared of feeling happiness and sadness, experiencing joy and pain, I will always have something new to write about that is better than my last, in context and in delivery.

 Reflection

When I was assigned to write about my literacy journey, the only thing I could think of was experiencing a writer’s block due to the heavy task of writing a eulogy. When I sat down to write about a story that highlights my personal experience with reading or writing, I wanted to talk about anything but the writer’s block I experienced. This is because I was afraid that it would be too hard to bring back all those memories and even harder to write about them in detail. The genre of this assignment is literacy narrative. A literacy narrative is a reflective essay that is told in first person and that follows a chronological order. It tells a story about a personal experience with literature overall. My assignment follows the conventions of literacy narrative because it focusses on a specific story of personal experience that has influenced my writing today. Also, my story doesn’t have a set structure rather it is a free flow paper told in first person. The media of this assignment is only digital due to the closure of the university because of the pandemic. The first part of this assignment, the draft work, had to be submitted to the professor via Blackboard under the class discussion section. This is because that way we could read each other's work and give feedback. Through our virtual classroom we were assigned different peers and we gave constructive criticism through answering some very specific questions. After reading the feedback and putting the finishing touches on the paper, the final drafts are to be submitted on Blackboard again. My stance on this assignment is that no matter how good of a writer one is or how much writing inspires one, there will always be experiences that will be hard to put on paper. This might be because of how heavy the experience has been, to the point where writing about it makes it a reality that you are willing to continuously deny. However, soon you come to realize that you can’t change reality, so you accept it and that’s where writing becomes a relief rather than a burden. My initial audience is my professor and my classmates in the peer review session. But there is a chance I might share this essay with my relatives and all the people who never got to hear a eulogy from me. To give them an explanation as to why and how it went that way. My purpose in writing this essay was to inform my reader how much I enjoy writing even though when I needed it most, writing seemed a burden more than a joy. I also wanted to use this writing assignment as a way to open up about what I went through and prove to myself that I can write about topics that seem impossible just by starting with a single word. The exigence for this assignment comes from the eulogy itself. As soon as I finished writing the eulogy, I didn’t want to read it to myself. I was too scared of reading it because of how imperfect it would sound. And for so long I wanted this piece of writing to be completely flawless because in my eyes the eulogy had to be as good and as perfect as the person who passed away. Not too long ago I decided to read the eulogy and even though it wasn't easy and emotionally draining, I felt proud of myself to have found the strength to do it. After reading it I wanted to talk about it with someone but I couldn’t and so when this assignment came up, I knew it was time to use writing as a way of opening up about the whole story. This assignment meets course learning outcomes one, two, and five. CLO 1 is to explore and analyze, in writing and reading, a variety of genres and rhetorical. The assignment meets it because it has a specific genre, that of literacy narrative and in rhetoric, this writing explores exigence which is a problem or situation that causes or prompts someone to write or speak. CLO 2 is to develop strategies for reading, drafting, collaborating, revising, and editing. The assignment meets this course outcome because I had to do all mentioned above in order to submit a final draft. Firstly, I had to read literacy narratives from other famous writers then I had to come up with an original idea and draft my own story. Then I had to give feedback to my peers about their writing and lastly, I revised my first draft based on my peer's feedbacks and only then I was ready to submit a final draft.