

Kennedy Fields
Literacy Narrative Draft
ENGL 275
Feb 2 2020

The Muse Sings Me a Story

The pages sang to me. I looked past the marks on the page and saw the story that the artist had crafted beyond them. All the crescendos and cryptic marks on the page told my fingers how to move; when my hands began to dance, my heart began to float. And my dad hadn't wanted to keep the piano. "It'll take up too much space," he had said when I was seven, and my mom was looking for refurbished pianos on Craigslist. "It's too heavy," he had said when the piano movers showed up to our house when I was eight, hauling the heavy wooden frame through our front door.

"She'll never keep it up. She'll just forget," he had said when I was nine and had just learned how to play my first recital song. But when I was 17 and had played "Claire de Lune" by Claude Debussy at my church's talent show and people asked, "Where did she learn to play like that?" he just responded "Well, she didn't get it from me!" He was proud. He was glad we had kept the piano. My parents bought the piano, my piano teacher showed me the magical ways of the ivory keys, and my desire to learn propelled me forward into a literacy of music that has opened doors into creativity and has stamped a love of music and art into my heart.

I became literate in music at nearly the same rate that I had learned how to read; the competence and knowledge that were required in my writing literacy seemed to naturally follow my fingers on the keys of the piano. C major and "Jack and Jill stories" floated around my head intermediately through first grade, and I didn't realize it at the time, but my opportunity to learn music propelled my literacy in reading and writing. I began writing songs for the piano a few

years after I began learning how to play. Bits and pieces of lyrics came together in my head, and a wild muse would often sing to me when I least expected it, prompting me to get out of bed at two in the morning and scribble notes down on a sheet of paper. When I'd listen to soundtracks for movies, I would lean my head back, close my eyes, and let the waves of goosebumps wash over me as the music penetrated my soul. Nothing could touch me the way music did. As I grew older and began to play movie soundtracks as I plodded along with my homework, my imagination would take over my preoccupied mind and begin to craft stories with the music I was listening to. As my cursor would blink on the page, stories would flash in front of my eyes, prompting me to once again pull out a pencil and scratch piece of paper to write them down. Other times, my head would be bent beneath my desk, enthralled in a book with dragons and fire and love while my math homework sat on the desk, unattended and uncompleted. In the moment, my eyes would be hazy, staring into the future of a story I had created in my mind, complete with characters and a full soundtrack. "Kennedy, get back to your schoolwork!" would be my mother's cry that often woke me from my trance, and while I would obey her in the moment, my head was always in the clouds. The same muse that gave me an ear for music and hands to play it often took over my imagination with stories prompted by music, and by the time I completed elementary school, I realized that if I didn't find a way to manage my creative breakaways, I would never get anything done.

"Here's another edition of my story!" my email read. "Let me know what you think, and enjoy! Sorry if the ending's a bit abrupt. I'm still working on that." Every other week in 6th grade, my friends would receive an email from me titled "New Chapter!" When my creative muse crept up on me, I would sneak away to the computer and write another chapter of what I called "the book that I'm finally going to finish" and send it to them. I've never finished it. But

the dreams I carried with me while writing the story propelled my imagination to new realms and gave me a creative outlet to manage my distracting imagination. When I took Introduction to Literary Studies by Keith Jones as a dual-enrollment class in 11th grade, I realized that if I didn't pursue English as a major or specialty in college, I would be doing something wrong, so I chose English Writing as my major. Dr. Jones taught me the ways of storytelling through the consumption of literature while inspiring my heart to create the same for others. The only times I ever question my choice have been when my midnight muse sings a new song to me, prompting me to consider whether I should have studied music. But then the moment passes and I realize that if I studied music, I would only start to despise the means that gave my heart joy. *So, writing it is*, I would smile to myself as I would climb back into bed. Stories told through words and music flood my heart to this day, and my writing would not be the same without the whisper of a tune in my ear.

My fingers are familiar with both the keyboard of a piano and the keyboard of a laptop. While my music has become a secret tool to me - one to be used when I desire inspiration, relaxation, or simply a clear head - writing has become my main weapon. My writing has developed alongside my journey of learning music; one would not be the same without the other. My parents, my piano teacher, and my countless writing professors have instilled in me a desire for the art of storytelling through both words and music, and the muse that sometimes sings to me at night will plant images in my head in the day, waiting for me to have a free moment to grab a pencil and paper to tell a story. The pages sing to me. I look past the marks on the page and see the story that the artist has crafted beyond them, and sometimes, the artist is me.

The Muse Sings Me a Reflection

Writing a story is what I've been doing for the past few pages, and writing a reflection is what I'll be doing for the next. Is it really a reflection, or more of a forward-looking analysis of how I expect my ideas to propel my writing to new fields? The writing that I'll continue to do will be the recording of a thought onto paper; the development of an inspiration or work of art that cannot be kept in the mind; it will be the process through which the artist within me will thrust words out of my head, rearrange them, and look back on them in the future to analyze and admire them. The successful process of writing occurs when I am able to adequately transform my thoughts into letters on a page, and when others are able to understand them close to the level on which I painted them to the page.

The writing process that I undertook in the narrative essay reflected the actions of the writing experience. Simply writing words onto a page is half the battle. In my narrative, I explained that when I couldn't sleep - really, when the muse played its gentle yet persistent song early in the morning - I wrote. I composed little poems and proses about the tickle in my mind. In the same way, I did that with music as well. I construed the notes on the page in the same way that words flew from my mind, and I created stories from the inspiration that could not be kept in my mind. I became more literate in the art of telling my own story through writing the narrative essay.

Developing literacy in any topic is made of many factors. It is one's desire to learn, the opportunities presented to you, and the resources and sponsors you have available to enhance the literacy you've grown up with. Culturally, the resources that are available to you make up a large part of what you're able to learn. Socially, the climate and people that surround you can help enhance, sharpen, and also sometimes dampen your understanding of a concept, and the

society and constructs within can make up a large part of your ambition towards a concept. The sponsors that were available to me included my parents, my piano teachers, and the countless writing professors that taught me literacy.

I did not have much familiarity with the key terms literacy sponsor and writing as a technology before class, but I was familiar with the concept of literacy. I had never thought about my own journey through literacy, and while I've told the story of my journey to the English major, I had never thought about my literacy as an abstract concept, able to be bent to more topics than just writing. I didn't realize how similar my literacy in writing and music were until this essay was assigned. At first, inspiration for this narrative escaped me, but after reading the TaeKwonDo literacy narrative for inspiration, I realized that I had a skill quite similar to that of a martial art: I had music. I discovered the identity I had in music that I was able to explain through the narrative.

The identities that we hold play a significant role in our literacy journeys. As mentioned by Tony Scott in *Naming What We Know* in Writing Concept 3: Writing Enacts and Creates Identities and Ideologies, "Our conceptions of everything ... are inescapably shaped by ideologies. To be immersed in any culture is to learn to see the world through the ideological lenses it validates and makes available to us. Writing ... does not exist independently from cultures and their ideologies (48)." This means that whether you think it or not, writing is connected to every aspect of your life in some way. Down to the most simple things, what you ate for breakfast can affect the tone through which you might write an email or write a comment on someone's Instagram post.

The way I learned to spell in elementary school still affects the words I misspell today, the church I went to growing up shaped the way I communicate about things that are important

to me, and the classes I've taken prior to this one have shaped the way that I draft essays. On a personal level, writing enacts the identity that one holds. The identity that I hold in music has shaped the way I write, and the way I write has construed a six-page essay about the literacy I've developed.