

My Writing, My Voice

By Samia Abbasi

I power off my phone and close my door. The brass lock on the knob clicks into place. A pencil, pen, notebook, and novel sink into the comforter of my bed. The rhythmic *tick, tick, tick* of the wall clock and the scratch of pencil lead against paper is my only music. I sit on my bed and open to a crisp page in my worn, purple notebook. I write, “Once upon a time” and characters tumble out of me, summersaulting into a new story. I feel their pulse on the paper—words form their skeletons and ink courses through their veins.

A novel does not begin with a blank piece of paper or with a sharpened #2 pencil. It begins with the unseen world—the imagination. In my mind, I create people with their own thoughts, personalities, and aspirations. They mingle together, growing and evolving. Their faint outlines gradually develop features, such as bright, wondrous eyes; brittle, white hair; or sharp, sinister smiles. An idea of an individual sparks a story, or a vivid image in my mind animates people that walk amid a new world—all inhabiting the endless boundary of my imagination’s kingdom.

I have chronicled my life and stories in notebooks since the sixth grade, filling over four so far. Writing is a voice. I connect letters together in looping penmanship to form sounds and words that convey ideas. It allows me to take the sounds, feelings, sights, and smells from my memories and imagination and capture them into sentences that others can experience. The prospect of my imagination stirring a reader’s mind is magic. By reading, one can slip away from the stresses that grip them and explore an entire world that may not be real. It manifests in a writer’s mind but now awakens in a reader’s.

Writers write: that is the advice that I treasure most. How can one develop their craft as a writer without putting pencil to paper and practicing daily? I inscribe strong scenes in my mind to keep the details fresh so that they may be used for future stories

or poems. I write stories often and although they may have holes in the plotline or unbalanced characters, I constantly develop new ideas on how to alter them. Editing and asking myself critical questions allows me to learn from my errors and continue to grow.

Reading novels as often as I can enhances my vocabulary and gives me insight into different approaches to conveying characters, plot lines, and conflicts. I devour words in my free time to observe patterns in fictional writing and revel in authors' unique, artful styles. On my Shelfari—a website that allows users to log and review novels they read on a virtual bookshelf—there are 548 books that I have read since the fifth grade, and that number will continue to increase for the rest of my life. In particular, I read novels that have similar genres to the stories I create: fantasy, the Victorian era, mystery, and romance. Reading is a key to insights on life that I cannot always discover on my own on a daily basis. It allows me to explore controversial topics on events and scenarios of our world, which develops my voice as a young adult.

I receive many questions from my peers and family: Where would you like to go to college? What would you major in? My responses were once marked with “hmmms” and “maybes,” but as my high school career progresses, my desire to choose a major based on English, creative writing, and literature grows. I aspire to attend a college that has a prestigious English program that will nurture my writing, rather than a college that has ample prestige. I will gain further insight on writing in a college classroom setting that builds a bridge to my dreams.

“Read, write, think, dream, and inspire”—a motto that is my credo. By allowing reading and writing to be an everyday, unchanging component of my life, I stimulate my critical thinking and take one step closer to my dreams of being an author whose words will inspire and enrich the lives of others. Transmitting my voice through writing, I will harness the ability to touch a young reader's life the same way reading opens up a tangible gateway to my passions.