

Creative Writing Portfolio

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Snare

A mattress rests in the middle
of a white room with white
walls and white
tables and you sit
in the centre cross
legged beneath ebony sheets that
had been left
in the dryer too long. Your clenched

fist wavers beneath bony
biceps as you whisper
my name through picket fence
teeth. Wrapping your mouth
around the words "look at me,"
as though the whistle
of your cracked window
and the growl of our broken
screen door is too loud, you trap

my eyes in the corner of your speckled
silver mirror.

GIRL IN MID TWENTIES

Outside. Day. A park bench.

A woman in her mid-20s sits next to a man the same age.

GIRL IN MID TWENTIES:

Hey, Kev, remember that time you left a spare set of keys to your apartment at my house on a metal ring on the table? Okay, well yesterday I had this dream that I found them in the garbage can like they tried to run away or something and it was like you tried to run away or something, too, but I didn't feel scared or anything and don't you think I should've?

Anyway, in the dream I said, "Did you know that keys don't grow on trees they grow underground like grass roots that cluster together like a spider web or the hair in your drain?" And I was so stuck on why that is. I thought to myself, "maybe it's just cold down there," but I realized that it's pretty cold up here too so that doesn't make any sense. And then I thought to myself, "maybe they just like each other," but I realized that people like each other up here too and they don't cluster together like that. And I started to freak out a little because if I'm being totally honest right now I can't remember where I put your keys last, so in the dream I started digging this hole in my backyard in case they ran away again. The keys, I mean, in case they clustered underground like spider webs or the tangled hair in your drain. I was digging and digging until there was no grass in my backyard, but still no keys.

So, I decided that I'd just wait for them. The keys. I'd just wait and hang out underneath that note you left at my house on a whim or something. The one that told me you left me a spare set of keys. I waited and waited but the keys never came. I lied there all alone, and then out of nowhere I just woke up.

She looks up, straight ahead.

I woke up and started thinking and thinking and then I realized something. I realized that I'm just like the keys.

She pauses.

I think I've gotta run away again, Kev. I know my mom's waiting for me, but I can't stay here any longer, ya know? You feel it too, right?

Another pause.

Look, here's the thing. I think you and I, I think we've been looking and looking but we can't find the keys, ya know? So I think I'll go to The Outback or the desert or something. Some place where I don't need keys or a metal ring or grass or even a table to put them on, and I hope that's okay with you too, Kev. I really hope it is, 'cause I want you to come visit me someday. And I swear I'll even find your keys before I leave. I swear I'll find 'em somewhere.

Expectations vs. Reality

Expectations

March 21st, 7:27 PM

I sit beside you in the park around the corner from my house on a rock by the lake. The sun is about to set, and it's starting to get chilly, so I wrap my sweater around my shoulders. As I look at the freckle on the left side of your upper lip, you catch me and smile

Your hand brushes my right pinky, so I wrap it around your index finger, looking away before you can react. My legs are shaking as I rummage through the random facts and movie quotes in my brain, searching for the script I wrote you weeks ago.

"Hey, I think I need to tell you something," I say as my lip quivers.

Your eyes catch mine and pull me in closer.

"Yeah, what's up?" you ask with a marshmallow smile.

"Well, I just noticed things have been...different between us. Don't you think they've been different between us?" I say.

Shock thumps through your pupils.

"No, no, not in a bad way. In a good way. I mean I think there's been something there, you know? Like something that's more than friends and I wasn't going to say anything, but you're leaving soon and I just thought that at this point what's there to lose, right?" I spit out as quickly as I can.

Smiling, you lean in, kiss me, grab my hand, and lead me out of the park.

Reality

March 21st, 8:42 PM

I sit beside you in the park around the corner from my house on a rock by the lake. It's dark already, and cold, and the sweater I chose to wear has a hole in its sleeve. As I look at the freckle on the left side of your upper lip, you catch me and look away quickly.

You put your hands underneath your ripped jeans and I scratch my neck with my index finger. My legs are shaking as I rummage through the random facts and movie quotes in my brain, searching for a way to talk to you without vomiting on my dirty white Keds.

"Hey, did you know they found a body in this lake a few years ago?" I blurt out.

Shaking your head, your eyes run to the caterpillar crawling near your foot.

"Sorry that was dumb," I spit nervously through my cigarette smile.

"That's okay you're just a little...different that's all. Don't worry, I still think you're cool." You answer, laughing at my pomegranate cheeks.

I look at my nervous, thumping foot.

"Not in a bad way. In a good way, I mean I think there's something good-weird about you, you know? Like you're always good for a laugh, even if it's about dead bodies in the Thames. Plus I'm leaving soon, so unless you plan on dumping me there now, what am I to lose right?" You say, smirking.

It gets colder and you point away from the park, signaling to leave.

Reflection

As for the poem, I came up with it one day as I was writing in my journal. I was sitting in my room and noticed the contrast between light and shadow, and focused on the feelings and memories that it evoked. The monologue I actually came up with today in class in response to the writing prompt with the picture of the keys. Originally I had been writing a monologue from the perspective of a guy convincing an alien not to abduct him, but I wrote a very promising poem in response to the picture today that I felt could easily be turned into a monologue. Lastly, the short story came from an idea that my friend was telling me about. She was hoping to write a nonfictional story that she would print out and then write all over like you would edit an essay, deleting and rewriting parts of her life she would want to change, and I thought of the idea for my story, which seemed more appropriate for the scope of this work.

Cowriters that have really influenced my writing over the course of the term are screenwriters Ilana Glazer and Abbi Jacobson who write the show *Broad City*. I have been reading a lot of their scripts online to see what their dialogue looks like in the written form and how that translates to the style of humour they use in the show. Although I did not include a piece of comedy in this portfolio, I have been writing several mock ups of comedic screen plays in my journal writing for the class that follows similar structures and themes that are used in *Broad City*.

I have also been reading Patti Smith's *Just Kids* throughout this semester, which is a beautifully written biography about Patti Smith & Robbert Mapplethorpe's relationship. Her writing has influenced me in two major ways. The first is that nonfictional writing can be just as, and sometimes even more beautiful and eloquent than fictional writing. The second is the way she includes Mapplethorpe's photography throughout the book. This has inspired me to work on multimedia projects, which blend together my photography and my writing, as these are my two major passions. I'm hoping to take the poem in this portfolio and make a photo series out of it that looks at all white objects with strong black accents. I also am contemplating taking the short story I wrote and turning it into a longer work that is accompanied by pictures that fall under each category.

Lastly, I have been reading a lot of poetry by Ali Blythe, who wrote the collection *Twoism* that explores the theme of difference and duality. This really influenced my poem and the final short story as well, as I was exploring the divide and connections between contrasting ideas. She uses enjambment to produce a lot of double entendre that is almost haunting, and I'm trying to incorporate that into my poetry a lot more.

I think that my writing practice has evolved a lot over the span of this course, as I have been introduced to a few kinds of writing that I have never done before (i.e. the monologue), and I have realized that it's possible to blur distinctions between writing genres. This has taught me to start using more poetic language in works that aren't poems, and to use colloquial language and dialogue in poetry from time to time. I think that this is important because it allows room to play with structure and form, which serve

as the base for a piece of writing. However, I think my voice, particularly my voice in poetry has stayed the same as it was at the beginning of this course.

As I am graduating, I hope to find a job that I can just work at in the daytime and forget about at night so I can focus on writing outside of work. I've been working on a mock up for a TV show that I'm interested in writing which would follow the line of humour in shows like *Broad City*. The TV show is interesting because it follows the life of a gay man and a lesbian woman in their mid-20s living in Montreal and getting into peculiar, funny scenarios.