

Kalli Melville
Reflection

SUMMER 2014

- Researched terms into a glossary
- Conceptualized the thematic/content of the chapters into eleven chapters
 - o Paris – coming home, even abroad
 - o Prague – food, encountering a tradition of another country, trip
 - o Secret bakery – getting to know Florence, experiencing Florence

FALL 2014

- Have trouble at first getting down to the writing, easy to put off
- Gave myself writing times (Tues/Thurs from 1-3, every other Friday editing for an hour)
 - o Work got in the way, didn't reschedule a time
 - o Writing got inconsistent and was incomplete – would write a little about one topic, stop, start another, without any full chapters emerging
 - o Gave myself the goal. By our next meeting in two weeks, have two complete stories
 - Goal accomplished and the project seemed more “real”
 - Easier to continue with the writing once I was starting to see a product emerge
- Issue with presenting incomplete stories to my reader
 - o “Just get words on the page”
 - For this semester, the goal is to complete quantities that can be edited for quality next semester
 - Hard to hand in something incomplete, but treating the writing as assignments makes it easier to treat the project seriously
 - Realizing that chapters don't have to be complete made it easier to write because I wasn't held back by the perceived expectations of perfection
- Issues writing this reflective part
 - o I know what I'm feeling, why write it down
 - Discussed with Kevin that this will allow me to better reflect on the writing process and that describing the process is almost just as important as the product of the process
 - Two months into the semester, I am beginning the reflection
 - Working through the issues on the page makes some things easier (some not so much)
- Meetings
 - o Going well
 - Meeting with Kevin once every two weeks, Karen once every month
 - o Kevin decided that this semester's writing/comments on the writing will not pertain to structural or grammatical issues because it could hinder the production of the previously discussed words on the page
 - I agree, deciding that this also helps me with my previously mentioned issue to hand in perfect products

- If he's not constantly giving me feedback I'm more likely to feel like the work I'm doing is good rather than if I'm being told about the issues in my writing
- Food piece
 - Wanted to write a food piece discussing something often-encountered in Italy
 - Obvious choices: pizza and lasagna
 - Decided on a pizza story because of the three stories that could be incorporated into the story because of it
 - Elizabetta's favorite pizza
 - Gusta pizza
 - Southern French pizza
 - Next step was looking at food writing to figure out the format that would best apply to the genre
 - Found Pizza and Parenthood article which discusses the importance of the food to the author's family
 - http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/28/opinion/jennifer-boylan-pizza-and-parenthood.html?_r=0
 - Make similar connections between pizza and Italian culture?
 - Through ingredients rather than just traditional idea of Italian culture
 - Style choices
 - Writing in similar style to article
 - Want to embed pictures, need to figure out how to do that
 - The story morphed into one about food and the importance of ingredients to Italian culture
 - Discuss prosciutto and the importance of where the pig that the product came from means to the flavor of the product
 - Not sure the piece is exactly where I want it to be, but going along with the getting words on the page theme
 - Like discussing Elizabetta and her cooking
 - Maybe I should have a chapter about her? A profile piece on Elizabetta. This could allow me to explore a difference genre/style.
 - Formatting choices
 - Decided to make it look like an article one would find in a magazine
 - Three column design
 - Not sure how the reader will find this
 - So many difficulties formatting
 - The columns were difficult and posed problems because the words wouldn't align with the columns. Had to go back and fix each new paragraph manually. Need to practice this formatting so I can get better at it
- Thoughts on the food writing piece
 - I liked writing something different from the other narrative pieces I've done. I thought the format went well with the subject matter and it allowed me to explore some different writing techniques

- I definitely think I will continue to mix up the genres of the stories, because it also helped to keep things fresh and interesting during the writing process
- Another benefit of this new format was all the trial and error I went through to figure out how to fit everything on the page the way I wanted it to. I think if I continue to explore the space on the page, I will gain some valuable formatting skills that could help if I were working with an employer that wanted me to format a newsletter or something.
- Morocco Piece
 - Splitting it into time segments (Day 1, Day 2) because drama happens in each segment
 - Include camel portion?
 - Interesting but not entirely plottable
 - Include shortly and continue to drama of travelling home
 - Definitely melodramatic at the Fez part
 - Picture use? There aren't pics for the first and last section so I'm not sure
 - Seventeen pages for one chapter, I will definitely need to cut that down
 - Is the final chapter too long? Too dramatic?
 - What is the purpose of this passage?
 - Be smart, plan
 - But people have good intentions
 - We were in "danger" at so many points and yet never in danger
 - What does this say about me? About how we saw people?
 - But also, things could have gone wrong. Was I wrong for mistrusting these people?
 - Ending with us crying too dramatic? Final sentence too dramatic?
 - Again, I felt the need to wrap everything up and explain to reader – common issue encountered in every piece I've written ***
 - Is that bad though?
- Elisabetta
 - Profile of my host mother
 - Formatting
 - Looked up formatting of online profiles
 - Decided to do single spacing with a picture at the beginning.
 - Single-spacing looked clunky on the page
 - Decision to go for double-spacing right now and format differently later on when I figure out what I want
 - Themes
 - Cooking
 - Passion for ingredients
 - Rome/Florentine influence
 - Relationships
 - Mentioned how she believed relationships don't last
 - Didn't end up including
 - Ref
 - Their relationship and the way it was unclear
 - How they won't get married but won't break up

- When she said he wasn't her soulmate
 - Didn't end up mentioning anything about their relationship, the way they interact specifically
 - They truly act like soulmates
 - Would that add dimension to Ref or make their decision not to be together too sad?
 - Should it be sad? It is a sad decision to remain in limbo
 - Don't want it to be overly sad. The piece should portray Elisabetta positively
 - Overall, I wanted to portray Elisabetta in a positive light. Do her comments to Ref make her seem cold? Or simply realistic?
 - I think it might be good that it isn't just a praising of her because it gives her dimension and the piece isn't simply a celebration of her which would be boring
 - And I conclude by connecting it to the food and never settling (wasn't an original plan but the themes seemed to work together)

FINAL REFLECTION FALL 2014

- Definitely proud of the amount of writing that was done, on par with original plan
 - Proposal said I would be done with 2/3 of pages (total was supposed to be 8-10 stories at 6-12 pages)
 - This would leave me at being between 32 and 80 pages of writing for the first semester
 - I am at about 50 pages (of varying style, some double-spaced, some single in columns).
 - Proud of this number, but I do see gaps in the overall compilation that need to be filled with more stories
- Find myself veering away from the more emotional stories
 - Are they simply hard to write? Do they not fit with the other pieces? Am I afraid of being dramatic?
 - Not sure, need to do some work on them, possibly over winter break to figure out why I have been avoiding them
- Format/Style
 - Did a lot of work with formatting and style, specifically with the more journalistic pieces
 - The original intention of the overall work was to be primarily narrative, but I like the concept of working with different genres and challenging myself to make them work
 - Next semester, that will definitely be my challenge to make all of the pieces fit together in the way a poet needs to organize all of their poems into an anthology
- Stories/Content
 - Over the summer, I had developed a group of about 14 story themes that worked plot-wise as well as theme-wise, each having an individual motif.
 - Some of the stories remained the way I had intended, some ended up being dissolved into other stories

- The original 14 story plan has been helpful in organizing my stories, and now that I have completed the first 2/3 of my pieces, I can fill in the gaps as I see necessary
- Meetings/Getting work done
 - In the beginning, it was hard to self-motivate on the project.
 - I had tried setting times for myself to write but work and other obligations got in the way so I felt my motivation slipping. About a month into the semester, I decided to start setting due dates for myself in order to ensure that the project would get done. Kevin and I would agree on a due date and it was an effective solution. I typically handed everything in on the date which we decided and felt more compelled to do the work when I had an obligatory “due date” to adhere to
- Overall feelings on the project
 - I am very proud at the work I have done so far and I am more motivated to continue, the more I see it coming together
 - I think next semester will be my biggest challenge because I will be working to put all of these seemingly unrelated pieces together into a coherent collection
 - Will definitely continue to be a learning experience and I look forward to challenging myself in the coming semester

SPRING 2015

- Mom and Alysse
 - Decided to write the piece as a collection of poems
 - I was starting to feel like my writing, and the collection as a whole, was becoming too narrative-heavy. I think I was becoming too focused on staying true to the facts than writing something meaningful
 - Weaving in food, I wrote a collection that I think describes what was going on when my sister and mom visited, but also kept to the original theme that I wanted.
 - I go with the courses of a traditional Italian meal: aperitivo, primi, secondi, dolce, and digestivo. In this way, I think I was able to weave what we were eating/doing with what we were feeling.
 - I like the way I was able to do this because I got to reveal how the recent events at home were affecting our trip.
 - I begin with lots of hugs, showing the emotion we were going through being united.
 - Then, in the second poem, I mention how I asked my mom how she was and she wasn't ready to talk.
 - In the third poem, I try to make light of the fact that I am showing off my superb Italian knowledge of cooking when I am actually performing a major faux pas.
 - In the dolce poem, I reveal how our emotions got the best of us and we couldn't ignore what had happened the week prior.
 - I like the way I wrap it up in the final poem because, although it is sad what happened to us, I think I express two things that I wanted to express: it's hard for me to be so far away while everything is happening but it's good that my mother got a break from it.

- I'm not very good at poetry, but I liked experimenting with the genre. I think it went well with the content and it will mix things up in my overall collection.
- I might try to do another poetry-based work somewhere else as well.
- Scene Description
 - Interesting task to take on, I'm not so used to writing without a story/plot in mind
 - I liked it, I liked just reliving the scene
 - I wasn't sure whether to include an image of the piazza, the view, everything or whether to let the piece speak for itself.
 - Already, I know I'm going to want to do a lot of editing on the piece but I'm just happy to have it written
 - The use of second person was new to me, it just sort of happened. I haven't decided if I like it or not.
- Getting off track
 - I am not happy at all with the progress I have had so far in the semester. I became wrapped up in the other things I was doing and really got off track with what I was doing—specifically with meetings with Kevin.
 - Luckily, at the beginning of the semester I had developed a timeline of where I would like to be at certain points in the semester, so this allowed me to get back to where I was. We are meeting 3/4/2015 after pretty much not meeting all semester and I hope to have all my writing done and a bit of editing, as was arranged in my timeline.
 - Because I have not been working efficiently and breaking up the work as I had been doing last semester, I am sort of cramming to get everything done before this meeting, but it needs to be done so I can stay on track.
 - Definitely disappointed because this is the first time I have veered off the course of this project, but hopefully I can get back on and finish with the time I have left.

EDITING

- Secret Bakery
 - Took away the pictures, it felt too bloggy to include them
 - Took out some unnecessary details that I think were included to add some authenticity. In the beginning, I was looking to *inform* my audience on some things Italian. Versus now, I think the goal is to entertain
 - I like it as a beginning chapter, I think it does a good job of capturing the panic I was feeling and the newness of it all