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Creative Writing

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Intro

Through this course, I have been trying to get more in touch with my creative side. I aspire to be a game developer and I know that story is often missing with today’s Triple-A titles. The thought of being a successful indie dev is the goal and I know that the story of a game can be the determining factor. I can feel that as the semester progressed, so did my skills in storytelling.

My favorite author is Rick Riordan. His ability to blend the modern world with mythology of multiple cultures is fascinating as has been my goal to be able to tell stories with such detail and grace. I was originally introduced to his work with the *Kane Trilogy*, a series about a pair of siblings making their way through saving the world from angry Egyptian gods. I fell more in love with his writing whenever I needed to write papers for my middle school English class, I was going to start with the *Percy Jackson* series, but I could not read a book with a movie, so I went with the *Heroes of Olympus*, the sequel series. This was at a point where I could not stand reading, I enjoyed it when I was younger than that, but whenever school stated to force it, the joy left. This got me back into reading. Over the next couple of years, I would go to the library, and I did get through both series.

Place has been one of the aspects I struggle with. I play games, I want to make everything visible or inferable to the player The constant descriptions needed for writing is my weakness. It feels too repetitive for me. I understand that it is important for the reader to know, but when the world and the graphics are telling the story, it becomes difficult to always transpose all the details to paper.

Poem #1: Ode to Racing

Some of the most beautiful experiences happen

when art meets science

and never is truer in the world of motorsport

Yet before the earth-shaking rumble causes mass enjoyment

There is a calm energy that want to be let loose

A red glow releases the energy,

And while no lightning strikes,

There is a roar of thunder

Let’s the true entertainment begin

Vibrant colors streak across your vision

The smell of exhaust noted just before wind

Peeling off the cars and putting violent storms to shame

Poem 2: List Poem

Into the last race we go

Two champions tied

All on the line

Side by side at the start

Lewis Hamilton, on the hunt

Eighth title within grasp

Max Verstappen, the Dutch man, with nothing to lose

A mad dash to the first turn

Hamilton nipping the lead

Just a few turns later, a late dive

Verstappen forcing Hamilton wide

Blitzing around the track to decide a championship

And there are still 57 laps to go

Lap fourteen, Verstappen stops for new tires

Pressure on Hamilton now grows

Factors working against him

A quick response, the gap between

Verstappen and Hamilton now neutralized.

Fifteen laps to go, the backmarkers about to be lapped

Hamilton’s progress now halted

Verstappen trying to cut through traffic like a canal through Amsterdam

Five laps to go, another driver in the wall

Safety car deployed, no gap remains

Fans watch, the safety car could decide the championship

No passing allowed and no actual racing

The Dutch man’s chances wilting like a tulip in the desert

By a stroke of luck, the incident allows a final lap of racing

The green flag waves alongside the white

As engines roar to life, being pushed to their limits

The third turn, Verstappen dives, his only overtaking spot

Aggressive and questionably legal, he is ahead

Side by side into turn nine, Hamilton backing off as Verstappen has the line

The compromised line making him drop back

The penultimate turn, Hamilton not in sight

The final turn, and a small dash to the finish line

Max Verstappen, World Champion

But it is not that simple, controversy

Procedures not properly followed

Decisions to be made another day

on the true final outcome

But for now, Max Verstappen, the first Dutch man to win the World Driver Championship

Poem 3: Self Portrait with Project Car

Days by

world still

Off ground

no control

Elements battering

Progress slowly

The interior removed

The hood lifted

Disassembling the block

Fresh life restored

Road worthy once more

A turbo to get going faster than stock

New wheels and stickier tires to use the power

Bigger brakes to realize when to slow down

A style that’s understated yet effective

A new start that no one can take

And origins that cannot be changed

Short Story: Finding Home

My name is Tom, a four-year-old orange tabby cat who is just trying to live my best life. I am here in this metal cage, it looks larger than the other cages, but that does not help me with the space that I need to be able to comfortably move around. The others are calling this a shelter, but I do not believe it. This place is loud and unwelcoming. Why would anyone get rid of me, I am thirty pounds of love? My humans have not come back but this new human boy has taken some interest in me. Until something happens, I should reflect on what has brought me here.

It was just an average day for me. It seemed strange that my, now former, humans rushed off at an odd hour. Nothing happened while they were away. I went on the counters; they do not like when I do this as they do not understand I am trying to help. When the humans finally came back, they had a new smaller human. It is loud and constantly wants attention, attention that should have been going to me. This child as they called it, would often mock me because it got the attention before me. It wanted me gone and my thoughts of security due to being the eldest child led me to a false security in who would be rehomed first. I gave the child a smack on the nose to let it know who the boss was. I was reprimanded. I do not understand why, I do not have claws or any way of easily hurting it.

The new human boy has come back, some of the other cats in here with me have said that being a lap cat will help me find a new home. A new human lady puts me in her lap. She goes by “Mom” and really likes the way I curl up on her lap. I do not appreciate the way I am compared to the size of a small child. It did not end well when a child is around. She seems quite emotional, she says that she is not going to get another cat, but I can sense that that is a lie. I cannot keep this lie up much longer myself; I need to get off her lap. There is a corner to hide in, between a desk and a wall. It is quieter, calmer, and makes the world slow down. But this joy is just temporary as I am being grabbed from the hips and pulled out. While I am being put in my cage, the humans speak about my fate and as I watch them leave, I am unsure what is in store to me.

Hal, that is the name they give me. No longer am I the house cat Tom who just wanted to assert my dominance in a losing battle. I am now Hal. These humans who got me out of my cage at the shelter have taken me to their home. This place is massive compared to the tiny cage I was in. The only issue I am having right now is that the humans are loud. They are interesting, but I am unsure if I can trust them. The smell here is strange, there are other animals in this household. I notice that the humans are trying to shower me in love, but I just want to find a corner to relax in. What feels like hours passes by and suddenly I am free. I rush into a room where there is a bed I can get under. As I crawl under the bed, a new area opens to me. There is a wooden cave under here. It is dark, quiet, and not easily accessible by the humans who want to hold me. Lying down, I can finally rest with no one trying to bother me. At least that is what I thought, this sanctuary now has light spilling into it and the human boy is pulling me out. I am smacking him, “Let me go, I was enjoying my peace”, but to no avail, he seems to not understand me. I am pinned down in his lap. This idea of faking a lap cat has failed miserably as he and Mom try to get me to lie with them and become friendly. I can tell that this stress is not good for me, something is feeling off. I am afraid I may be getting sick.

I am trying to go to use this litterbox they got me, but they have this wooden pellet litter that does not feel good under my paws. I cannot do this; I need my clay litter. I have had a few accidents outside of the litterbox and the humans seem to be getting annoyed. When I speak to them, some idea is getting lost in translation. “I am trying”, “Something is wrong”, “I don’t want to cause issues” are all things I have said to them whenever I have an accident and they find it. I now know I must try more drastic measures. Marching into the living room where the humans seem to congregate, I squat trying to pee, thankfully they recognize that this is a sign, and they rush me to the litterbox. I try and try, but to no avail. All that is left for tonight is to rest and hope that it goes away.

After a rather uncomfortable night of rest, I am dragged from my cave. I hate the cramped caged box they put me in. I fight them with little slaps on their hands.

“I don’t want to go,” yet no one listens to me.

“I know that you do not want to go, but you have to,” Mom is trying to console me.

Mom and the boy have realized that I simply do not fit in those little cages. The boy runs off into another room and brings back a white basket with a towel in it. Begrudgingly, I allow them to set me in the basket and a moment later the world goes black.

“I don’t like it in here,” I tell the person driving me. It smells like the boy, but there are other smells. During the drive, I felt something push me, but I could not see it. The music being played does not help me understand my predicament. This experience goes on for a while as the boy drops me off at the veterinarian building and I am afraid this may be the end of my time with this family.

“I wasn’t trying to cause trouble, don’t leave me here,” I plead him.

“Calm down Hal, you are here to get some medicine, so you quit acting up,” he tells me.

The vet takes me from the boy and starts to look at me. I am hesitant to let them look at me; I am not sure that they are friendly and will help me. I want them to know I am serious, I am brave. Backing up into the corner for a defensive advantage and rearing up to make myself bigger, I smack their hands for a little while, yet they seem unfazed. A bowl of food is set out for me, I come back down to all fours and now I contemplate one idea while I start eating, *Did the boy sell me out? Can I really be bought this easily?* There seem to be other vets as different people with similar coats take care of me. That uncomfortable feeling when trying to use the litterbox has gone away, but the boy still has not come back for me.

“Where is my family, I want to see them,” no one listens to me, “I told them I would behave, do they not believe me?”

The days go on, the sun fades into the moon and I question if my new family would come back for me. As I mope in my corner, accepting the love of the vets to fill the void left, as if an angel descended on me, Mom has come to take me back home. Holding back tears, I start to rub up on her legs and show my affection and gratitude for bringing me back home.

As I return home, the boy takes me around to make sure I know where everything is. I cannot determine if he thinks I am stupid, or if it makes himself feel better. I cannot let this disrespect stand without punishment. Many of the other cats that were with me at the shelter had their claws, they spent their time destroying the scratching post given to them but not me. Without claws, I can sneak up on the boy and smother him. My ability to sneak around this house is unheard of to the others I spoke to. All I must do is wait for him to go to sleep.

Night has come, and the house is quiet and dark. The human boy is asleep and has no idea of his impending doom. As silent as a snake, I make my way into his room. The only noises are the two rodents on wheels in cages, running, chasing after some unobtainable goal. I prepare to hop onto the bed, I square up and make the jump. All this planning goes to waste as I land, the bed makes noise and shakes in such a way that I wouldn’t be surprised if he thought an earthquake happened.

Slovenly, he rolls over. He sees me in the dim light. I start to panic. *He must know my plan; this won’t end well for me if he fully wakes up.* With my tail all bushy and a look of panic, I start slowly backing away.

“Hal…, what are you doing?” the boy mumbles to me, “it is too early in the morning for your shenanigans.”

“I cannot let your disrespect to me whenever I finally got home after you abandoned me stand. I shall smother you and make you regret your decisions.”

“I am not feeding you now, it is too late. I will feed you in the morning.”

“I do not see how that is relevant to this conversation, but as long as you hold to that promise, I will let you breathe another day.”

“Hal, I have school. Shush”

*I do not understand why he started a second conversation, but it will benefit me.* I hop down and head towards Mom’s room. She usually keeps a part of the blanket on her bed turned down for me to sneak under. As I make my way under the covers, I can only think of one thing, I must find a way of getting that boy under my control.

This family is beginning to fall under my control, and it is wonderful to have this power over them. They answer to my beck and call. I still believe that they cannot understand me, but with some walking and head butting, they begin to comprehend my commands. Around the house, the family has put hand crocheted afghans on the furniture. I then leave my fur and my scent on them and show to everyone that these are my spots to watch them do my bidding.

There are chairs around the house in front of windows so I can watch the outside world. As much as I want to explore it, they do not let me. The boy says that it is not safe for me out there; I know I am an apex predator, nothing can harm me. Mom has put bird feeders for me to watch. I must make sure that the birds do not attack the house and try to replace me.

They have been trying to put me on a diet and they say that a cat shouldn’t be thirty pounds, but that means that there is more of me to love. They go through all this trouble to get me a special food that is supposed to help. They give me so little food, but I do not go hungry, but I want more. With a little bit of sweet talking, I get extra food. With some careful timing, and a few shouts, I get the humans to come to me. The boy seems to be immune to my charm, but Mom gives me more food almost every time.

I know that I rule this house because when the humans go away for an extended period, someone comes over and takes care of me. They treat me like royalty so I shall let them stay here and watch over me. They look on in enjoyment as I roll around in the sunbeams that stream in through the windows. I make sure to leave my fur on all their clothes, so any other cats know that they are mine. I know that they are mine as they were easily trained to obey me commands, with the exception being the boy, it seem like a coin flip if he listens to me. They keep trying to make me into a lap cat like I faked being when they got me, but they do not accept the fact that I will never be one.

It has been a long journey, but I am home.

CNF Essay

The careers of one’s parents will affect the thought processes, actions, and beliefs of their children.  My mother is a police officer, and this affects how I look at the world and the turmoil that goes on. Being the son of a police officer has and forever will be a part of who I am and my identity. There is an ever-changing dynamic between police and their local communities across the nation, and I cannot have any more pride in her persistence to help her community. Every time an officer was slain in the line of duty, it was heartbreaking to see how my mother would have to put on a straight face, but I could feel her slowly breaking down as the numbers continued to rise. I paid attention to every death I could, mourning for the families of the officers, and praying that I would not end up in a similar situation.

            My mother has and continues to be an officer of the law since before I was born. Her career used to be seen as cool back in early elementary school, that young age where everyone wants to be a firefighter, a cop, or an astronaut. Everyone would look up to the jobs and those who worked them with such wonder and enthusiasm, but I could not relate to that feeling. Not to belittle her achievements, but she was Mom, who went to work and earned money for the family, but other people in my grade thought it was a big deal. I used to have her come in for show-and-tell, and all my friends loved it.  They used to raise their hands up in the air and “surrender” to her. Every now and then one of them would randomly do it in high school, she was always amused by their antics.

 I believe I was in fourth grade on  December 14, 2012. Sandy Hook happened, and I was around 10 years old without social media to know what had happened. In Newton, Connecticut, a gunman entered an elementary school and opened fire.  By the end of it all, twenty students and six staff were murdered.  My mother sat down with me and my younger brother to talk about what had happened. I was not fully able to understand the concept of a school shooting, but I was told I was not supposed to try to get to her if something like that were to happen at our school. There are many places where people find comfort, and when you are young, you find it in your parents. To be told that in a traumatic situation like that, we were not to try to seek her out, you have to wake up to a very harsh and unforgiving reality.  She tried to explain her reasoning was that it was her duty to “stop the threat” and she could not do that if we were around her.  She said the only safe place was with the teacher in the classroom. This is not the response you expect from your mother.

            2013 rolls around and my own world gets flipped upside down as I land on the wrong side of a coin toss, my mother and father got divorced. Divorce is already an awful thing to happen to somebody and the physiological effects will radiate for quite a while. This is compounded when you can only see one parent. My mother was able to go to the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia.  This is a very prestigious accomplishment and a once in a lifetime opportunity. This put her about twelve hours away for ten long weeks, and my brother and I were under the supervision of our father. My father was going through what could be almost considered the “Borchelt Midlife Crisis”, an event almost genetic as one of his brothers cut ties with all family and another almost filed for divorce when they were the same age as my father was at that time. He was emotionally unavailable, and this did not make the process any easier, nor did what I would classify as his mistress. He went from a relatively care-free man to now having a “stick in his ass”. This was only the beginning of the changes in his nature. I fell into the spot of a favorite child, and I shamelessly took hold of that title, not putting enough care into how my brother was being affected. My brother got in trouble all the time with my father, and I still feel guilt for doing nothing when I should have said something.

My brother had been diagnosed with ADHD and it was just before the divorce that this happened. While it was not an excuse for his often-erratic behavior, my father took the lack of control my brother had very poorly and had little patience. A change in punishment for even the smallest misdeed would be taking toys away from my brother. This was something as small as responding with an affirmative hum instead of saying “yes sir”, yet we never in our lives responded with “yes sir” prior to this.  That was my father’s solution for a few weeks before he decided that my brother was not “learning from his mistakes”. Faster than the change my father had when my mother left for the National Academy, my father had gone from reprimanding and taking away toys, to now breaking and destroying them.

This was reality for a few months. My brother and father were at each other’s throats, and I regretfully did nothing as I should have been doing as the older brother. Our father had decided to move and stay down in the basement while he was working on buying a new house. I will give him credit for getting a house close enough to be able to get us to school and for us to see him, but it was not an easy transition from the house I had lived in the majority of my life. As time continued to march on without a second to process what had happened, my mother had completed her course at the National Academy. My father was not willing to take us to her graduation, but her sisters took us all the way to Quantico.

This was a unique experience because Quantico is not open to the public, and it does more than just the National Academy. It is the training grounds for the FBI tactical forces. We were able to see Hogan’s Alley, a fake town for urban tactical training. The facility was amazing, a state-of-the-art university with the benefit of everyone being proficient in firearms. My mother could barely contain her excitement to see my brother and I after not seeing us for the past couple of months and only being able to listen to my brother when he called about the disagreements between my father and brother. It was amazing to see the, now former, Director of the FBI, James Comey. This was a messy point in my life, but her willingness to continue in such trying challenging scenarios is an inspiration about how I go through life.

My mother did make some fascinating connections while in Quantico. A Marine Sergeant was a classmate of when she went to the FBI National Academy. That sergeant was assigned to watch over Marine One, the call sign for the United States President’s helicopter.  President Obama came to my hometown of Evansville, Indiana back in October of 2014. I do not know how the sergeant was able to get clearance or authorization for me and my brother to get up close to such a legendary aircraft. This was not just seeing the helicopter from the side of the hanger, but we had the ability to sit in Marine One. I was able to sit in the pilot's seat and the President’s seat. Looking back, I realize how big of a deal it is to sit in the exact same seat as the leader of the strongest nation on Earth. To this day, I still have the photos of me and the craft. But politics always make life more complicated.

As I entered my high school years, having your mother as a local law enforcement officer was not as “cool” as it was in elementary school. Although she purposely did not work as a school resource officer, as to try to separate her work from our school careers, everyone knew that my mother is a cop. The teachers knew it and my peers definitely knew it. It has affected my social life in a big way. Since junior high, I have been excluded from groups because they assumed I would be a “snitch”. No invitations to parties, no offers to hang out, none of it. I would not be truthful if I said it did not bother me, and that going away to college will give me a chance to be “me” without the specter of a police officer mother following me around.

            Time rolled forward and tensions between communities and law enforcement continued; my mother would start to worry about my safety. I would continue to wear thin blue line and other pro-police shirts and have a similarly designed plate on my car. I was now driving and put more worry on her than just the standard of your child driving. She would remind me to be more vigilant about law enforcement because of my size. I love cars, and I definitely never speed and definitely only modify my car in ways compliant with laws and regulations. Nevertheless, my mother was worried about how I would act if I were to get pulled over. As she is one of the captains for the Gibson County Sheriff’s Office, every officer knows about me to various degrees and that would put both me and an officer in a slightly awkward situation if they had to report to their higherup that they gave me a ticket. Thankfully that has never been an issue, but I have been pulled over by out of county officers and that is her concern. I do have a potentially overly chill attitude around cops, and I do not get any form of nervousness when pulled over. I was also told not to name drop, which may have helped me to get out a ticket, but a mother’s wrath is worse than any ticket. I have seen enough bodycam footage and listened to my mother about how a traffic stop goes down and I understand why a cop would be guarded walking up to a car. An officer must walk up blind to a situation not knowing what a person is doing or what is going through their head. She pleaded again and again that I should just comply because if I was told to step out of my car, six foot five is fairly intimidating to a majority of people. An officer could potentially see me as a threat and the situation could quickly escalate.  I do think that my cool attitude has gotten me out of most situations, but I know it doesn’t work every time.

            The situation where it failed was when I was taking my brother to church and I, for legal reasons, one hundred percent was not doing seventy miles per hour in a forty-five zone, mind you that I theoretically was keeping up with the flow of traffic. About a mile from where I was clocked, an Indiana State Trooper pulled me over, nearly ignoring me, but I missed an exit that would have let me disappear without dropping a gear. That situation got me a ticket, he only wrote it for me for going fifty-five, and I think not instigating an argument saved me from getting reckless driving on my record at the age of seventeen. Flash forwards a few months, and by pure chance, my mother took a security detail and ended up swapping positions with the officer that ticketed me. She told me that she informed him that I was her son, and his response was that if I had name-dropped, I may have gotten out of the ticket.

    Being a cop’s kid is not an easy burden to carry.  Since this has been my entire life, I don’t know any other way.  I see life differently than other people sometimes due to this, and I think I am better off in the long run for it.  I have vicariously experienced some true heartbreak from hearing discussions, that I should not have heard, about cases she worked as a detective. She also used to come home and tell us funny stories about things that happened during her shift.  I got to hear about life raw and unfiltered.  I probably will never escape the “officer’s child” syndrome. It is not fun to simply watch idlily knowing about the world around you going to hell. I have had to grow up quicker than I would have preferred, but if life was fair, it would be boring. It is awful knowing so much about the world of police and sometimes I wish I could live in blissful ignorance.