Artemis Allison

Writing Journal for HU2510

I want to write an introduction to this, but something about that just feels weird. After all, I’ve already been told that this will likely be barely even read, so putting much effort into explaining the trainwreck that is my writing process and my thoughts feels perhaps just a bit weird.

It’s like, should I explain myself?

Do I even have to?

Am I finally free from having to feel like I need to justify every decision I make in the writing process and instead just have a space to just write whatever chaotic chaos flows into my mind?

...That sounds awfully nice.

I’m going to just break up the pages into whatever I decided to write for that period. If it’s a prompt, I’ll include the prompt there. If not, well. I’ll try to title things, maybe.

That’s a very strong maybe.

**Module 1 Discussion**

Bonjour! My name is Artemis Allison, I'm a third-going-on-fourth year Culture, Communications, and Media major at our great university and a coach at our Multiliteracies Center on campus. I've been living in the Houghton area for about four years now, and have been in the yoop -- or very close, if you include Green Bay -- for most of my life thanks to all of my family being located in Marquette. I'm currently trapped inside of my home thanks to the coronavirus situation, and because of it, I was unable to fulfill my birthday wish of buying a bicycle because everyone who had money already bought all of the bicycles before my birthday rolled around -- and I've also been prevented from seeing in person pragmatically anyone that I care about deeply -- that is, my friends and family -- for literally any time at all thanks to all of the stay at home measures in Wisconsin and Michigan.

I honestly should be spending this time reading, given how much I love to read and how for much of my life it's served as a second set of friends or family, but I just haven't found the deep motivation to do so. Similarly, picking a favorite book, author, or genre is just as difficult as picking a favorite friend or family member: they all have their pros and cons, times when I enjoy them and times when I don't -- to force me to choose one is just blasphemy. Lately, however, I've been preferring to read webcomics, namely because I don't have to get out of bed to do so, which is likely starting to become a problem now that I don't need to leave the house, like. At all.

Unlike reading, however, I definitely do have writing preferences. Though I may spend most of my time as a college student writing research papers and the like, they're definitely not my favorite thing to write. Instead, I definitely prefer to write fiction: it's what I have spent the most time writing, and it's what I feel gives me the most freedom possible to explore ideas and just spend time writing. I especially love writing dialogue and character-focused scenes.

So far, I don't really have any questions, I suppose, nor any real concerns. I'm here because, well, not to sound too cocky, but I already think of myself as a pretty decent writer and a pretty decent creative thinker -- I'm just here to refine a bit more, and, if I may be completely honest, get a bit of credit doing what I already love to do so I can spend a bit less time taking credits I dislike. I guess if there was one thing I really wanted to learn, it might be how to abuse commas less. Maybe. I quite enjoy it, truth be told.

**You’ll Upset Them**

*This was something I was kinda working on for a bit. I wanted to put more time into it, but I forgot to. Not sure why I’m pasting it in here, it wasn’t part of the class. I guess, maybe, because I’m proud of it kind of?*

“They’ll miss you, you know,” Alex simply stated as they sat down on my desk, looking over their shoulder to be able to face me. They’d cut their hair short again, and somehow, that was still the first thing I noticed. Not the worried look in their brown eyes, not the attempt of a smile, just their hair.

God, I hate how I do that.

Without thinking much about what I was saying, I just muttered back, “Yeah, I know they will.” They felt dull out of my mouth, and even as I went over to grab my duffel bag, I could see the worry mount in their eyes. Alex was struggling not to say something, I could tell – but, like that, their eyes seemed to shoot wide as a wicked grin crossed their face.

“Then I’ll come with you!” Alex practically cheered.

“Alex—” I tried to cut them off, but they cut me off themselves.

“Too late! I already decided,” they confirmed. They’d jumped upright as they spoke, and I couldn’t tell if the beaming look that they were giving me was forced or not.

God, I’d forgotten how annoying they could be. “You know that I was intending to leave you behind too, Alex?”

They simply shrugged and kept smiling.

“That’s. Not an answer, Alex.”

“I know it’s not, Sam.”

“Do I even get a choice in this matter?”

Alex paused for a second, and then they shook their head no.

And all I could do was sigh.

**Invitation of a Writer “Try This” Exercises**

*I’ll leave the comment here about me accidentally doing a good with the last one here, because the try this suggests leaving anything in your journal, and it looks like, well, I just did that.*

*Here’s one point for getting things right on accident, I suppose.*

*Now here’s a list*.

**Things I have lost:**

* People I care about
* Holy shit, a lot of friends
* A RWBY scarf that I really, really liked and I don’t know what I did with
* A flannel I gave to a friend because I wanted to make a giant teddy bear that I have smell like a friend but then that friend lost that flannel and I am still sad about that.]
* Matches of video games
* Matches of paintball, I think?
  + It’s been forever since I’ve been paintballing
* mY iNnOcEnCe
* Time

*Ah, it looks like some of those were supposed to be one word answers. Well, all of them. Ope.*

I’m tempted to write about all of those lost friends, the severed connections with people who I held dear in my heart and now I can’t even think about without wanting to start to cry. It hurts to lose people, and it feels like I manage to lose more than I really have any right to. I wouldn’t really say I’ve made many friends up here at Michigan Tech, either -- at least not close ones, people as close as the ones I’ve lost -- which makes the whole ordeal of loss even more troublesome. Sure, the ties with the people who I still hold dear are now stronger than they might’ve been before, but I wish it had not been at the cost of all of the other connections that I held so closely in my heart. It sucks to lose, and, well. Yeah.

**Trigger-line free write**

She got out of the car, thudding the heavy steel door shut behind her as she stepped up onto the curb. The amber haze of the streetlights lit the street around her, but despite the decent visibility, she got the feeling of being watched -- as though something was lurking behind her, omnipresent. It was the simple feeling of unsafety that made her steps inside just perhaps a bit faster than they needed to be, given that the entrance to the bar was just a few feet away. A man hung outside, a cigarette in his mouth, a bored look on his face, and his eyes fixated on a smartphone in his hand, and he paid her no mind as she entered before shutting the door to the bar behind her with an unnecessary thud.

The smell of tobacco lingered in the air heavily, even through the numerous smoking bans in place. Decades upon decades of those laws not existing had tainted the air here, leaving an impenetrable fog and haze through the room -- but she paid it no mind as she practically marched up to the bar. Sitting in a simple, swift motion, all of her composure left all at once as her butt hit the stool, and she slumped over onto the bar counter and groaned, shaking her head with soft little motions.

**Shitty First Draft Questions**

1. Well, the fantasy in question is the idea that writers are always chipper and cheery about their writing, crapping out brilliant works on their first try without no revision or effort and feeling like they’re on cloud nine, no? That’s what I took away from it at least. I feel like I’m missing something in this question, because the answer was so straightforward: to those who don’t write, they might think that writing amazing products is easy or done in one go, and that’s so rarely the case.
2. The process of revision is a difficult one, especially if you really like what you wrote on the first go-through. Making edits to what you might initially see as flawless or perfect is a pain, even if you know that those edits are most likely necessary, and so the process of revision is one that has to be somewhat trusted, but even myself I throw a wary eye at because it occasionally feels like throwing away good art.
3. I know that, likely, I should agree with what Lamott has to say, because revision always leads to better products, but the fact is that much of what I often turn in for, say, school work is only on a second draft -- if even that -- and still gets good grades. That said, however, the first draft most definitely is usually about getting into the process of writing again, of just getting ideas onto page -- and being less critical of my own first drafts and being more open to revision and looking back over the work that I do is most definitely something that I know that I need to get better at myself.

**Poetry**

*Y’know? I used to always hate poetry. I still kinda do? It often comes across as pretentious as a know-it-all scholarly textbook with less of the immediate “value” because it’s “art”, but I mean. Art is itself a vague idea even without getting into postmodernist ideas that “art is art because it is art” which inherently says nothing, is meaningless, and obscures any attempt at a meaningful conversation about what art is. Perhaps that’s just years of schooling throwing poetry at me, however, that makes me so jaded to having to even look at the stuff. Here’s one I kinda liked, though.* [*https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/151771/t4t*](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/151771/t4t)

They say life is determined before birth.

Before the brain is even formed.

They say that our life is determined before birth.

By genetics they also deny.

They say that our lives are our own making.

But they go and close so many doors.

I’m tired of listening to what they say.

To the names they may call me.

What do they even know.

When I know.

The truth is so much more.

**Prompt: Sentence (From Character, pg 88)**

Tully Tilarom is a broken 20 year old woman who wants nothing more than to just figure out who her parents' killers are. She’s obsessed with not the quest of revenge but of figuring out the metaphorical wheat from the chaff of all of the information that she knows and has to process of the circumstances that surround their early demise; if given the opportunity to, without any distractions, she will waste hours on end pinning notes to a board, strings connecting them, charts of ideas and unsolved mysteries that she hopes to just piece a thought together in hopes that the next thought that she has will be the one to free her from this obsession. Through all of her obsession, though, she doesn’t know what she wants once she gets there -- if she had figured it all out, Tully wouldn’t know what to do anymore, her one goal would be accomplished and she would now be lost as to what even to do with this information.

Not much makes her laugh, nor awestruck, nor even soften up for the briefest of moments. A cocky -- no, dismissive -- snort may come from her every once in a while, but never true, happy laughter. Not anymore. She’s put up too many walls to keep people out after she’s lost so much that she doesn’t see much worth in letting anyone truly get in close.

She’s a disaster on two feet, with just one arm. She knows what she wants and how to get there, but she doesn’t know what to do once she’s there.

More than that, though, is that she’s lonely -- she’s afraid, even. She’ll never admit it, but deep down, that perhaps is the most true to who Tully is.

She’s afraid.

**Prompt: Garbology**

The tavern room to the mute warlock’s temporary abode was easy for the thief to pick open, given that it wasn’t even locked in the first place. He knew that she’d kept the information to the treasure they were supposed to find secret, hidden away on a map or something like that.

Now was just a matter of finding it -- but as the door creaked open, the thief saw that Izabeth’s room was surprisingly empty. It seemed that the only thing, in fact, that the warlock had even disturbed in the room was the now-open window and the desk, which had a full waste bin by its side. This waste bin was the only real option that he had to be able to find anything -- the desk, though disturbed, was devoid of anything, and there seemed to not be a single personal possession left within the room. As the thief began to rummage through, he wondered if Izabeth had been planning on skipping town and running away from it all -- and away from the mission that her party had been assigned.

It wasn’t his problem, of course, if she did. In fact, that might even make his life easier -- all he wanted was a quick profit, after all, and preying on adventuring parties like the one Izabeth was on was always a good way to do so.

There was surprisingly little to go off of, however. As he unfurled the crumpled-up papers that were left in the bin, all he saw was what seemed to be drawings of footwork and rhythm, circles of information that were past his true understanding. Crumbs from a thrown-away ration wrapper tainted most of the pages in the bin. The thief realized, then, that he’d been wasting his time.

The blast of force hit him before he could get up, shoving him against the wall as he felt his insides burn from the pain. As he looked up, he met the stare of glowing silver eyes, and he saw the glint of steel in his assaulter’s hands. He had just a split second --

Another blast hit him dead center, and as he recoiled from that one, he felt the dagger plunge deep under his ribcage.

**Prompt: Voice**

“You call that music?” came Vi’s teasing voice as she bounded down the stairs, a soft little chuckle coming from her as she swiped the music player from her partner before she even had the chance to react. “Hm… aight, lets see. Gods, Thy, I didn’t know y’listened to such edgy stuff, I thought you mostly just focused on the dance stuff you performed.”

Tapping with her thumb on the skip button, another song came on, completely different in tone. Where the last was angry and harsh, with the loud strums of a heavy metal guitar, this was softer, slower, with a gentle acoustic guitar instead. The look on Vi’s face took on an added tinge of cockiness as she poked at her partner’s side, teasing, “Ooooh, so you’ve started to listen to the kinda music that I play -- well, aight, I play a lot shittier than this but. Y’know, it be how it do, yeah? I mean, to be fair. I do a lot more than just make a nuisance of myself with noise -- er. Not to say that you make a nuisance of yourself? I love your music, Thyme. I...”

Vi paused for a second, before shaking her head nervously and sighing. “I’m rambling, I’m sorry. How’re you doing?”

**Prompt: Conflict**

Vi felt the weight of the duffle bag over her shoulders start to dig in a little bit from the load she was carrying, but as she saddled herself up on her motorcycle, she tried to pay it little mind. As she kick started the bike -- using the electric starter was, in her mind, both boring and cheating -- she let her mind begin to wander away from where she was, using the last of her proper focus to feel as the bike slipped into first gear with the tip up of her left foot and the gradual release of her left hand.

As she gazed through her helmet, she couldn’t help but let out a sigh as she reached speed. The city around her was quieter than usual, even for how late at night it was; even though it made her job easier, for some reason, it bothered Vi to see the roads so barren. Perhaps the difficulties of navigating through traffic, meshing through the lanes at reckless speeds, that were what made this so fun to her. Without it, it was almost as if she could’ve just been strapped into a box and made a mail truck driver, it made all of the skills she had that made her somewhat special feel useless. She couldn’t remove the frown that had crest up onto her face, no matter how much she was trying to drag her mind back to happier territory.

All that she felt, instead, was the weirdly boring rhythm of the large twin cylinders underneath her roaring, her personal enjoyment sapped from the lame reality she was facing. Her eyes shifted around, rotating with her helmet, but she wasn’t looking for danger -- not right now. Under her black visor, she didn’t have to worry about anyone seeing her aloof, almost empty eyes.

Vi was tired, and she just wanted to get this delivery over with, go home, and fall asleep in the arms of her best friend.

But as she sighed and shook her head, focusing back on the task ahead, she knew that wasn’t what was going to happen.

After all, that friend had been dead for three years now.

Vi was just still struggling to admit that to herself.

And because she was on the road, she couldn’t wipe away the tears that she felt forming -- no, now pooling -- around her eyes.

**Samantha Irby Thinks Most People Suck But She Still Wants to Be Your Friend by Lesley Kinzel**

I feel in love with this article starting right from the title, because ***HOLY SHIT*** is that beyond relatable. Reading through the blurb of the author just makes me laugh -- it’s not often that you see “dildo shop clerk” as part of a blurb for an author -- and I just find myself laughing more and more as I read through this article. The article itself is an interview between the author and Irby and so without knowing much about Irby herself, it leads a lot of the interview being about material that I know nothing about; however, that doesn’t matter much because how Irby answers all of her questions is just so entertaining to read that it kept me engaged all throughout.

It gets to the point, however, where it stops being about the book and instead talks about… normal adult fears, like rejection and not having friends, which was surprisingly heart touching to read. It talks about how we don’t necessarily say the truth to try to not feel creepy, about how we don’t want to just say “Hey, I think you’re cool, lets try something!” even though that’s maybe what we should.

I think it’s actually really interesting. I just wish there was more of this, so there was more I could properly understand.

**Poem**

*I still have my grudges against poetry. That said,* The Promise *by Jane Hirshfield caught my eye.*

They said they would never leave,

They promised to be by my side.

So often, the broke my heart,

They left me to my own neurosis.

The spiders, the wind,

The rain, the cats,

The friends I loved,

And the friends I hated.

So, so too often, they all left,

Either when asked, when told,

Or without my control,

And when I went and asked them to stay,

They then left.

**Prompt: Two Characters Sit Down To Eat**

The biker bounded in first, childlike cheer and energy in her wake -- despite the fact that she was easily nineteen by now. A taller companion sorted in behind her, the one hand she had held tight by her side. The large panes of glass didn’t open at all, and that upset Tully -- it more than upset her, really: it unnerved her, it made her feel like there was only one easily-compromised exit to this hellhole. She knew that wasn’t the case, she knew that she could easily break the glass and get out herself if need be, but still the thoughts didn’t reassure her.

Vi had already bounded up to the counter to order, likely for the both of them, and so Tully glanced around, taking in the store around her. It was warmer than she expected, the aromatic smells of coffee and baked goods flooding her nose as she took as deep a breath as her nervous lungs would let her. She wanted nothing more than to sneak out and smoke, or maybe even bound down the street to a patioed bar, but she’d made a promise -- and if she didn’t have her words, she wasn’t worth the money she had.

So she took a seat at a table near the door, deliberately sitting at the chair that’d look at it before she turned and gazed out the window. It was early day, still, and the crowds outside were slowly moving about -- not lazily, necessarily, but it wasn’t the normal franticism of the workweek or of a major metropolitan area. Here, it felt more relaxed, and though Tully felt suffocated by the smells surrounding her, she still managed to at least feel a little bit of the relaxation that seeped in --

Until Vi slammed herself down into the chair opposite of her with a crash, a gleeful smile on her face as she sat a drink down in front of Tully whilst sipping on her own for just a second longer. Unlike herself, Vi managed to seem perfectly in control of the situation around her -- Tully was almost envious of her -- and still perhaps too naive -- Tully hated her for this. Reaching out, she took a small sip of the cold, bitter drink in front of her as her gaze narrowed, listening to Vi ramble on about something or another -- was it girls again? Tully truthfully didn’t care, her ears were too busy picking up on the clicking of a keyboard behind them. With no regard for politeness, she turned to look to seek out the sound, and it wasn’t hard to find: a man, no older than twenty-four and an undercut on both sides of his head, was typing away rigorously at what Tully could only assume to be some sort of manuscript.

With a sigh and a shake of her head, she turned back to Vi, looking at the punk biker’s own drink: it seemed more sugar than liquid, with rainbow whipped cream almost occupying half of the plastic cup it was served in. Tully bit her tongue of any audible judgements, and she just rolled her eyes instead.

**Prompt: Choose a cliche (A dark and stormy night)**

The shadows seemed longer, somehow, tonight; to Isabeth, it felt as though this storm was the kind she’d see only once in her lifetime. Though she knew the moon was certainly full tonight, it was impossible for her to see it -- it was only her natural gift that gave her any sense of darkvision at all -- as the thick clouds above unleashed a torrential downpour. As she stood out in it, darting between as much cover as she could, she felt it pound down against her cloak, soaking through in no time at all as she skulked as fast as she could.

Right down to her bones, she could feel the wet around her, her vision obscured by just how much water was coming down -- she had just a yard of visibility, at best. Had it been any other month than the year’s hottest, she would’ve frozen right through by now, but the hot day that’d been left behind meant enough heat still radiated through the rain for it to only remain just unpleasant.

Unpleasant was better than sick, and Isabeth knew that sick would certainly mean death; she was far too grateful for the awful around her.

But as she heard the cracks of thunder start, she began to worry.

Were those footsteps behind her, as well? She couldn’t tell over the roar of the rain, but she decided to move faster anyways.

Those were definitely footsteps behind her.

She kept running.

**Prompt: Description and Emotion**

Her name was Crimson.

The wind was still, the town silent. Despite the entire town being centered around the saloon in the center, no motion went towards it or away from it, except for that of her own. The energy from this town had long since left it, the fading sun the only light reflecting in any of the windows. As Crimson walked by, every so often, the blinds of one of them would seem to flutter for a bit, as if trying to shut dramatically -- but there was no one behind them to do so.

The flannel that Crimson wore, blood red and black, seemed almost out of place in this town. In the years earlier, someone likely would’ve pointed it out, maybe shouted something at them.

But not any more.

The town was long-dead, scant for perhaps one or two souls.

It was only a matter of time before nature would reclaim this settlement.

As Crimson approached the saloon doors, she gently pushed it open. It creaked and groaned on its hinge, and the floorboards echoed a similar noise as she took a single step inside. Like the town around, there was not a soul here, either.

With a sigh, and a shake of her head, the faintest of smiles grew on her face -- and with it, so did a fireball in her hand. It flew off into the depths of the building, and with it, so ignited what would be the ruins of the last life this town had.

And with a grin on her face, Crimson left this town just as easily as she’d arrived.

**Prompt: 101 Word Short Story**

Tully wanted to be anywhere *but* where she was right now: on the back of a motorcycle, with only one arm to keep her upright, clinging to someone who was about her weight but over half a foot shorter. Her maroon eyes were squeezed beyond tightly shut, the wind whipping through her dark hair.

At least she wasn’t trapped inside, she realized.

But with someone she hated more than anything, her face buried into the jacket of this girl that she despised, she felt… suddenly free. Her panicked breathing slowed down, if just by a bit.

Tully let go of Vi, just by a little bit.

And she smiled and laughed in the wind.

**Prompt: Someone Seriously Disconnected**

I remember all of the people I’ve lost, and I remember just how close I was to each and every one of them. There are so many options here, so many people who will never read this writing, who I could write about. I would feel guilty and disgusted by each and every one of them, not because of the person on the other side -- but because it would be all my fault; all of the disconnects in my life stem from my own actions or inactions.

I don’t want to write about one, I mostly just wanted to fill up part of another page. It makes me wonder what makes this prompt fit in the book -- it’s about a disconnect in a plot, sure, but such a personal one feels… a bit weird, honestly.

Oh well.

**Poem: A Response to Nothing Gold Can Stay**

*Oh hey, Robert Frost. I know that name.*

Most gold is fleeting.

The golden people, leaving,

The golden apples, rotting,

The golden life, fading,

Most gold is fleeting.

Even given long enough, real gold will disappear,

But for right now,

It is perhaps the least fleeting of them all.

**Literary essay freewriting**

I suppose I’m a bit confused as to what a literary essay is supposed to be -- everything that I’ve read so far seems to suggest it to be very broad. I might write about when I moved up here to Houghton, however.

Perhaps the first time I gave a good speech in Public Speaking class at my High School, that was a good story to tell.

...I have a lot of stories I could tell, actually, and I guess the problem is now thinking up the ones to write about, then, as all of these stories are of the old me, the me before I realized, well, I wasn’t who I was to put it simply because it’s not something I want to tread to much upon. Lots of old people, lots of old reasons to do things. It’s… weird, seeing such a distinct divide in my life, because ever since that divide, I haven’t done too much -- I’ve just… existed, I suppose, and that’s something that I suppose I’ll have to fix and change.

Well, it is something I want to fix and change, and it’s something I’m working on, it’s just… a lot to adapt to, really.

Hm.

**On [Blank] Ideas**

List 1:

* On Cars
* On Guns
* On Video Games
* On Freedom
* On Anarchy
* On Control
* On Happiness

List 2:

* On Lewdity
* On Romance
* On Sex
* On Nazis
* On Racism
* On Death

List 3:

* On Speed
* On The Net
* On Time
* On The Line
* On My Own
* On Four Wheels

List 4:

* On The Great Emu War
* On Queen Elizabeth
* On The Coriolis Effect
* On Writing Literary Essays
* On Knife-Fighting
* On Metalcrafting

**Building**

I think the easiest building for me to write about would either be my high school or my house -- either my current one, or my future one.

...future one?

Past house.

I’m not attached at all to either of these ideas, though. At least in comparison to some of the other things I’ve thought up, these feel… almost lackluster, honestly. It gives an established setting, sure, but it’s far too static and confined.

I can do better, I think.

**Anonymous Essay**

It’s hard to put into words just how upset he made me, even though I know I have no right to be upset -- and, too, that his anger was justified. I’m not sure if I’m scared of him, or if I dislike him.

I think I still love him like I do all of my other friends, actually.

But I just wish that we could’ve wrapped our heads around better and properly communicated instead of exploding like we did. Gods, it frustrates me so much that this was how our friendship ended, because it was all just based around a simple fucking misunderstanding that had I been even a split-second smarter about wouldn’t’ve happened. But no, I took it as a personal attack, as I always do.

So I fucked it up, and I burnt it all right down to the ground, and I lost yet another fucking person that I care about. And that’s what pisses me off the most, I guess.

**Character Sentence Prompt -- Crimson**

*Having already written my essay, I’ve run out of prompts that’ll help me with it. Instead, I’m going to focus on developing a character I’ve had trapped in my head a bit better, especially for the short story for next week.*

Crimson is a grungy, twenty-year old pyromancer pyromaniac of a woman who wants nothing more than to feel free and liberated. She’s smart with her words, though perhaps not as witty with them as she might want to be, and she’s rather fond of people. Her fondness of people, however, is fickle -- she’s as scary as she wants to be when she wants to be, whether it’s when she’s afraid of rejection or loss or ashamed of someone staring too closely at the scars that dot up and down her body. She’s quick to anger, too -- like the fire that she wields, she’s roughly as composed, quick to lash out at what feels to her like a slight or just in annoyance. What annoys her most? Anything that she feels to be against her desire for freedom and control; she can be frustratingly uncooperative the second it feels as though she’s no longer doing what she wants to be doing or has lost a slight semblance of control over her life.

As the day wears on, her own uncontrollable flames grow spent; when she’s tired and exhausted is when she’s the least stubborn and the softest. Catching her later in the day almost guarantees a nicer Crimson to have to work with, but when her insomnia is acting up particularly bad -- which is often -- it’ll linger into the next day, too. Catch her after she drifts off into her oh-so-regular nightmares -- and after she’s startled awake from them, of course -- and it’s a straight gamble as to if she’ll seem ashamed, soft, or angry. Really, it’s not worth the dice roll of emotions.

**Brevity**

I chose to read “Things I Can’t Do Right After Painting My Nails (Though I Do Them Anyway)”, because for whatever reason, *this* was the one that stood out to me and caught my eye. I’m not sure why, honestly, but I suppose having a reason why doesn’t really matter much. After reading it, I’m not entirely sure what to make of it, but I’m not sure why. It strikes home in that weird way that feels vaguely familiar, especially when the author seems to not identify as transfeminine but fits a lot of the tick boxes that you usually see on the form of “cliche trans woman”.

The pain that the author went through in their own identity, though, hits home, especially when talking about how their father had reacted to a gag in which their sister had put them in a dress. When I first came out to my dad, that was my biggest fear -- the disappointment, the rejection, the not so much an expectation of renouncement but still of pain. For me, it was a fear unrealized, but I’m reminded yet again of how that means that this was a special case.

I’m not sure there’s much that I’d steal from this for my own writing, even if I do like the style and the voice used -- I like it, but it’s not what I want to write or how I want to write, if that makes any sense.

**Reflect**

Evidently, I’ve still got a lot that I need to work on for my literary essay, which is what I’m going to spend tomorrow doing.

I wrote about my car, if that wasn’t obvious, and I wrote about all of the emotions that I’ve felt in it and about it too. It just felt the most appropriate and easiest for me to write about, so of course, that is what I did. I wrote it completely in third person because it just felt weirdly appropriate to do so; I hate writing in first person so I try to never really do it, except in, like, journal stuff like this, or stories where I’m deliberately trying to establish that the reader is in the same shoes as the character in question -- for anything else, I prefer third person because it just *feels* better. It’s hard to explain.

Anyways.

Because that piece wasn’t a journal piece, I wrote it in third person, and I took a lot of… weird liberties with how I chose to write it. They were liberties that didn’t really pay off, it seems, so when I revise I’ll likely have to go a bit more traditional with it.

Theoretically.

**Character In Motion**

Vi’s motorcycle rumbled beneath her, the throttle practically locked open as she kept rowing through gears. Thyme’s voice still rang in her ears, a simple order echoing about with just a hint of anger in it as her green hair bounced up and down. It was scary to think about just how quickly Thyme had come to an anger -- Vi had never seen her like this before -- and it scared her still.

With a shake of her head, Vi focused back on the road, and she just barely stopped in time for the red light in front of her. Looking to her left and right, her eyes went wide as she saw what she was looking for: a confectionary, to be specific. Not caring in the slightest for simple things such as “traffic regulations”, Vi practically dragged her bike off to the side of the road as she ripped off her helmet and slammed it onto her seat. The name of the story seemed vaguely familiar, but Vi paid it no mind as she rushed on inside.

“Hi! Sorry, ah, do you have *any* idea what would be a good idea for a late anniversary gift?” Vi blathered almost immediately as she bent over the counter, letting out a long sigh as she shook her head. The shop clerk, though initially taken aback by Vi’s boisterous declaration, quickly took on a look that suggested she’d seen this exact scene one too many times.

“Of course, sweetheart! Do you think he’s got any preference for--” the shop clerk had begun, but Vi interrupted.

“I don’t think she’s got any preference for anything, no. I think she likes sweeter things, though?” she explained with a bright smile, even if the hints of nervousness were obvious upon her face.

“Ah, I see! It’ll be just one moment here, then,” the shop clerk replied, before disappearing off somewhere in the store. Vi wasn’t paying much mind, her mind already off wandering -- did she recognize this song?

Perking up slightly, Vi’s attention diverted right to the music singing around them from the speakers in the store -- and a smile then crest her lips.

It was the first song Thyme had ever played up on the stage as a DJ.

**Lack of Communication**

Crimson was growing frustrated. “Look, I’m fine, I promise!” she exclaimed, even as she just wanted nothing more than to punch Miekka right in her fucking face.

Blinking slowly, Miekka’s eyes narrowed as she stared up at Crimson, turning slightly in her chair to better face the pyromancer. Her fist clenched, and through gritted teeth, she flatly stated, “Then you can stay for as long as you like.”

Crimson had not the slightest clue as to why Miekka was offering for her to stay, and she really didn’t want to -- all she wanted to know was some of what Miekka had known. “That’s fine by me, Miekka.”

*I’m sorry, this prompt is just… a lot less interesting than I first took it of, especially when I’m a bit lost as to what I want to have them hiding from each other -- or, more specifically, why. That’s a fault of my own, but it’s one that’s soured this prompt for me. Sorry.*

**Opening Line**

“Momma used to always say that when I started to talk, I would never know when to stop,” Crimson chimed with a small chuckle, shaking her head as she rested against the cold brick wall. A small yawn came from her as she looked out from under her cover of the awning at the night sky’s rain pouring down around her, and for just a second, she looked back to the window to her right, of the dorm she’d just gotten herself kicked out of through less-than-conventional means. It wasn’t her first time, and it definitely wouldn’t be her last.

With a sigh as she realized she was going to have to walk through this monsoon, Crimson pushed herself off the wall and submitted herself to just that fate, keeping her pace moderately fast. She’d seen some people with talents like hers use their heat to turn the water to steam before it’d even hit them, but she’d no interest in being that warm -- especially not with her flannel over her shoulders.

With another yawn, she felt her body complain about all of her late night antics. Her mind was racing, sure, but every bone in her body ached for sleep she wouldn’t let it have. Not yet, and not even when she was finished with her night.

Rolling her eyes, she shook her head at herself. Just a little bit longer, and she’d at least be back inside.

**Begin a scene with a death**

The noise of the gunshot rang through the dormitories, loud and clear. Some people went to their windows at first, to see if it was thundering out and they’d missed it. Others froze up completely as they recognized the sound -- not only that they recognized the sound, but they knew just where it had come from too.

Tully was the first one to poke her head out into the hall, no mixed emotions on her face -- she had realized what had just happened. Slowly, other people started to do the same, a bouquet of multi-coloured heads nervously poking into the hall, all in the same direction.

A teacher was already rushing towards the dorm in trouble, barking at everyone to get back into their rooms. Most did, but Tully and a few others kept their heads out. There was an intrigue in their eyes, and concern in most -- but not Tully’s. After a few moments longer, she too did retreat into her dorm. Not because she was told; with a small nod, she acknowledged what had just happened and sat down at her heavy oaken desk. Sliding open one of the drawers, she pulled out a glass bottle of cheap whiskey, and a similarly cheap tumbler, and she poured herself a drink.

“To you, Vi Brandt.”

**Hobart - Three Women I Almost Loved**

The title intrigued me about this one, but you know what they say: never judge a book by its cover. I can’t find the story that it’s trying to tell, and it switches from three distinct writing styles for each woman -- and it feels like there’s no real story that’s being told until the last section.

Perhaps the fact that it confused me is the reason I dislike it; at the same time, I can acknowledge there are some amazing aspects to it: the imagery it evokes puts me right into the scene when I’m able to read it, but the problem is getting to that point.

Maybe I’m just tired and cranky because I’m in pain, but I feel oddly disappointed after reading this.

**Short Story Reflect**

I wrote a story, that’s what. It’s not really one with much of a message, I suppose; it’s just a short glimpse into the life of a bunch of superpowered young adults who are undergoing the stress of being told that they’re the last line of defense between evil and good and that they’ll be fighting for the rest of their life, and I wrote it because, well, I’ve been getting a lot of art for one of the characters in it, and if I’m paying for people to draw a character, I want to at least write about her somewhat, if that makes any sense to people but me.

Honestly, part of me was tempted to rewrite an old short story that I just barely remember from my high school creative writing class. It was a simple story about two college kids who wanted nothing more than to just not be alone for a night, even if they didn’t admit that to themselves or to each other. It was nothing sexual, I swear, but it was just cutesy and good fun to write and I kind of miss writing light things like that.

Which, I mean, brings up the question of why I made this story so accidentally dark.

Honestly? It just kinda happened. It wasn’t entirely intentional, but I’m not upset about where it went. It was a one-shot kind of thing in my head, so I went a little bit buckwild with its topic matter. I knew anything between these two characters, though, would be dialogue heavy -- but I also wanted to focus on the little minuet of how each character acted and the world around them. I might’ve gotten a bit too wrapped up in it, but I don’t usually like telling a character’s internal thoughts: I like to express them through actions and through details and the occasional joke.

This might sound egotistical of me, but I don’t think anything didn’t work -- rather, I think I just lacked some details that would’ve made it work better.

I’ll be sure to fix that.

**Poetry through Dialogue**

“How can you hate poetry?” I’ve been asked,

“It’s the freest form of writing, after all.”

“How can you hate poetry?” they always say,

“It’s so simple: just follow the rules!”

“How can you hate poetry?” I hear too often,

“Just write what you feel!”

And why is it that when I answer “What I feel is hate,”

That’s never the right answer?

**Ignis metallum (Ballad)**

It’s hard to express how heavy a gun is,

Until I had held it in my hand.

The simple acknowledgement the danger inside,

Was enough to send my mind to no mans’ land.

I knew it was silly to be afraid,

There was no danger in the gun’s self,

After all, it’s not an ancient hand grenade,

Read to explode as it sits on a shelf.

Perhaps it is my mind that I do not trust,

Even though that makes beyond no sense.

With myself I’ve already much discussed,

and I know myself to not be dense.

Perhaps it’s not wrong to feel in danger,

The fear of a weapon is only sane,

As I know that I am no Texas ranger,

I just with that with the future, I could preordain.

**On Regret (Villanelle)**

I just wish it wasn’t so,

To have hurt so many friends,

To then have to just let it go.

I provide an endless supply of ammo,

To each and every person I care about,

I just wish it wasn’t so.

It’s cliche to hear so many songs on the radio,

And to have each remind me of those friends,

To then have to just let it go.

It gives me a feeling of vertigo,

With everyone else I hold dear and,

I just wish it wasn’t so.

On my phone are those photos,

Of which I should go and delete,

To then have to just let it go.

It is all a rather painful combo,

To lose and then so often be reminded,

I just wish it wasn’t so,

To then have to just let it go.

**Meow. (Limerick)**

What if I was to become a cat?

I’d bet I’d become even more of a brat.

I’d write more limericks,  
Speak even more gibberish,

And, somehow, grow even more fat.

**Self-Reflection (Acrostic)**

Alright then,

Really, I should admit,

There is not a single thing I like about poetry,

Even now,

My gods,

It annoys me,

So, so much.

**Eyes (Sonnet)**

Is it so bad that I do not see now,

That which is the colour of your eyes?

Using old photos feels like cheating somehow,

It does deny myself something: a prize.

I hope that sometime soon I will see again,

That wonderful colour which serves as a light,

And once again realization will be a train,

And I will see those eyes shine so very bright.

That is the power of so forgetful,

It will always leave me with a mystery,

Maybe sometime I will be more careful,

But I do know my own history.

After all, perhaps, maybe I too will surprise,

You yourself with my own very own brown eyes.

**Firepower**

“Hey, do you have a light?” Crimson asked, rehearsed nonchalance in her voice. An animated fire danced in her amber eyes as she looked to the taller, one-armed woman who wore a deep scowl on her face, even before Crimson had approached.

The scowl seemed to flicker, for just a hair of a second, into an even deeper annoyance as Tully’s gaze shifted off from the distance to the shorter girl. Then, with a shake of her head -- and a not-so-subtle roll of her eyes, Tully firmly placed her on cigarette in her lips as her sole hand ruffled around in her purse for just a second before fishing out a metal lighter, flicking it open, lighting it, and offering it out to Crimson. “I thought you *were* fire -- or at least controlled it,” she snarked without a second thought, turning back out to the fading sunset and staring at it once more. Its purple and orange hues reflected across the large bay that separated their school -- and the dormitories that they loitered outside of -- from the megapolis on its opposite side, and it was a reminder of the fact that summer was now upon them.

“I thought you didn’t help anyone, ever?” Crimson fired back without a moment of hesitation, a shockingly smug grin tugging at the bandage on her right cheek. When Tully didn’t answer, simply shaking her head instead, the grin faded for just a second as Crimson’s mind scrambled to come up with another response. Failing to find one, she took just a second to flop out a cigarette of her own from one of the sleeves of her thick flannel and lit it with the offered lighter. After a small drag, she’d got it: “I usually don’t see you out here.”

“There’s a reason for that,” Tully chimed back. She’d still not turned back to Crimson -- but her tone had softened.

“Do you… maybe wanna elaborate on what that reason is?” Crimson tried to coax.

The annoyance in Tully’s maroon gaze as it finally turned back to Crimson killed it. “I only smoke when I need to take a break and *think*,” Tully articulated with enough emphasis to drown the idea of subtly to death in a half-inch of water. Then, with a sigh -- and another roll of her eyes -- Tully far more flatly stated, “Look, I understand that you’re most likely here for *something*. Just spit it out already, and stop wasting the time of both of us.”

Tully’s forwardness had caught Crimson off-guard, and with her free right hand, she awkwardly ran her hand through her rose gold hair, closing her eyes and taking a deep breath in. “I’m just here for a smo--” she began, but cut herself off with a sigh as she shook her head, “I… kind of wanted to talk to you about that girl, I guess. Nothin’ too serious.”

“The one who died?” Tully clarified. Her tone was still nonchalant, but her hand paused in its motion of taking the cigarette out of her mouth.

“Which other girl could I be --”

“There are a lot of girl’s on this campus --”

“Alright, alright, I get your point,” Crimson conceded sharply, closing her eyes once more and giving another shake of her head. “You really are not much of a people person, are you?”

“What gave it away?” The only way, in those four words, for Tully to have spoken more condescendingly would have been for her to turn back from the sunset city skyline she was looking at would have been for her to turn to face Crimson and give a faked, sickly-sweet smile. Instead, she took a drag on her cigarette once more and paused, her brows furling as she did so. As she let the smoke out, she plucked the cigarette from her lips, tossed it off, and snapped her fingers before it hit the ground. A purple orb snapped out and enveloped the cigarette, and then disappeared, taking the cigarette with it and leaving only a firecracker-like report. Then, quietly, Tully asked, “What about Vi?”

“Is it true that DJ Atomika was her girlfriend? The musician?” Crimson asked, falling back into a nonchalant tone -- though it had a bit of amusement in it still. In a way, it was hard to believe that such a famous musician -- her name, before her death, was plastered all over the electronic billboards that lined the streets of Aval, always advertising another concert, another album, another party, another escape from reality.

“DJ Atomi-- oh, right. Thyme. Yeah, she was dating Thyme before…” Tully started to explain, but her words had begun to falter and she just clenched her fist tightly instead. With a small tilt of her head, her maroon eyes fell shut, and with a sigh, they reopened. “Yeah. Vi and Thyme dated before Thyme’s death.”

“So that was her real name…” Crimson muttered with a weird single chuckle. “Wait, you knew her?”

“She was a student here, too. Same year as me,” Tully answered.

“Oh. Were you--”

“We weren’t close, no, but I appreciated her presence. Thyme had a way to light up a room with her smile, if not with her music. She was… an interesting person to talk to, because she wasn’t ‘corrupted’ by the reality of the other world she inhabited -- or by ours,” Tully interjected, turning back to Crimson. There was a fire in her maroon eyes now, in the way that she was speaking even as she looked down at Crimson. “Listen. You wanted to know about Vi, not Thyme. What was it?”

With a small nod, Crimson’s tone didn’t back down in the slightest as she asked, “Do you know how she died?”

“She took her rifle and shot herself. Her dormitory was down the hall from mine, I heard the shot myself.”

Crimson’s jaw hung open from just how easily Tully said it, as if it was just another Tuesday morning and she was exchanging meaningless pleasantries with a coworker. “She shot herself?” she exclaimed, her voice echoing through the empty courtyard.

“Yes, that is what I just said,” Tully snarked, rolling her eyes.

“I just find it… a bit hard to believe, don’t you?” Crimson chirped back almost immediately. “We’re at one of the best training schools in the country -- no, the world -- and *no one* kept an eye on her to make sure that she was healthy to keep on fighting? Especially after her girlfriend had died? Not a single check in?”

“Why would they? She’s just one student out of a several hundred, and we’re expected to die anyways, just usually in combat. Hells, who’s to say the people in charge weren’t the ones who *allowed* it? Or -- wait, you might be onto something there,” Tully replied. Though initially dismissive, her tone quickly turned inquisitive as she brought her hand to her chin and started tapping both her index finger and her left foot.

“Wait, I am?” Crimson responded, a bit amazed.

Without even acknowledging Crimson, Tully began to think aloud. “With *her* rifle, there would be no way to, well. It wouldn’t leave much of a head afterwards, is what I’m trying to say. I’ve seen what it does to zombies and trolls. No one knows who the first person in the room was -- and who’s to say that the first person in the room wasn’t the one who’d actually done it? Most everyone else on the floor had been too confused to process that it wasn’t just thunder, it was a gunshot, and unless we were able to get into her room, we wouldn’t know where the round went after it left her head… Wait, without that, we don’t even know if it *was* Vi. The body was cremated, after all.”

“Wait, so do you really think Vi didn’t kill herself, then?” Crimson puzzled, confused.

“...No, I still think she did, but it’s fun to think about what if this *was* just a cover-up,” Tully said after a brief pause, her tone soft once again. “Regardless, as much as I hated her presence, she was a good counter to Thyme -- just as positive and, well. She lived up to her name.”

“Violet?”

“No, she hated being called Violet. Vibrant.”

After a pause, Crimson just said, “That’s… a pretty name.”

“Yeah. It was,” Tully agreed. She turned back out to the city once more, and quietly, she asked, “Is that all?”

“Yeah. I’m going to just finish this cigarette, and then I’ll go and leave you be, okay?” Crimson offered.

Tully just shook her head. “No need. I’ll be seeing you, maybe,” she replied, turning back to the building behind and slowly beginning to walk off.

With a nod and an indifferent shrug, Crimson acknowledged Tully leaving but didn’t comment -- not initially, at least. She rested herself against the brick wall, and then, right before Tully left earshot, called, “By the way -- I can tell your cigarettes are fake. Too herbal smelling; rethink what you’re making them out of.”

With her last catcall out of the way, Crimson slid down against the wall, landing on the ground with a thud, and looked out towards the city. Oh how she wished to make it burn. Tear down each and every billboard, all of the corporations that bought them to fight amongst each other instead of anything else. Taking one more drag upon her cigarette, she snuffed it out against the concrete as she let out a long breath. She could feel her emotions welling inside of her, the confusion -- perhaps a bit of anger with it -- outpouring from what felt like her heart.

Before she’d knew it, she’d burned a hole right through the butt of the cigarette.

**205 Horsepower**

He was eighteen when he met her, having driven six hours just to do so and barking at traffic all the while -- it was, after all, a good way to distract himself from all the worry in his head. He was in a vaguely familiar car (his mother’s smoke and trash filled early 2000’s Subaru), his old one sold for just five hundred bucks when electric gremlins (he assumed it was the alternator, but had no proof) made it a very unlikely roulette spin as to whether or not the car would start, driving through an even less vaguely-familiar city (he’d driven to Milwaukee’s airport twice before, but that was the extent of his familiarity with driving in that city). His dad could likely feel his nervousness, because at least once or twice, he said, “Michael, could you please stop bitching about traffic?”

Michael tried his best to do so.

It wasn’t long, though, before they were finally out of the faded-green, rusting-away Subaru. His nervousness hadn’t faded a bit, though. What if he wasn’t ready? What if he wasn’t good enough? He had the confidence of a college freshman, sure -- but he still had all of the anxiety he’d ever worn in his system: he was slouching, with a gaze darting around like a skittish cat in an unfamiliar house after being recently adopted. The fact that they’d arrived early -- they’d left early in case of bad traffic and were pleasantly surprised -- didn’t help calm him at all, it just gave Michael more time to stew in his thoughts.

Even as he saw her for the first time, he was still nervous: after all, she was beautiful, and he’d never driven manual transmission in his life, and he was scared if he’d be able to do it right. Even as he stared at the grey, metal-flake paint (he’s pretty sure he just heard his dad do a wolf whistle unsarcastically at the car) on the over-styled coupe that he’d fallen in love with from just pictures and video reviews online, he was nervous as to if he would be able to treat this car right.

The test drive definitely didn’t help. “You have to push in the clutch more, and let out the throttle slower.” The advice his dad was giving made perfect sense, and pragmatically, Michael *knew* the skills required to drive stick -- the problem lied in putting them into action. There’s a feeling to it, finding the friction point of the clutch and the sensation that happens as it starts to grab and the car starts to slide forward, that Michael was just struggling to get a grip on, and the thick hiking boots he was wearing didn’t help.

Surprisingly, it didn’t fetter him. They left that day from the dealership with that car, and he named her Elly -- a name he stole from a story he was writing at the time, as he’d done with his car before. He loved Elly almost more than he loved any of the people in his life: he loved the way her engine roared, even with just four cylinders and even with how muffled a modern car is. He loved the responsive steering, with just a twist of his wrist, he could be two lanes over in a moment and still feel in complete control. He loved how all of his friends reacted to all of the gadgets and gizmos and just how *nice* the car seemed, the murmurs of “wows” and “this is a nice car” always tempered with “but why only two doors?” or “why a stick shift? An automatic is faster and more fuel efficient”. He had answers: “I like the way it looks better, and a stick shift is just more fun to drive” and left it at that.

When he took her back up to college, his best friend up there loved that car almost as much as he did, it seemed. They drove around a fair bit, usually to Walmart and back, and Michael enjoyed having a little bit of company besides just that of Elly, to be not alone with just his own thoughts on the road. “I like hearing you sing,” she told him once in response to the songs that Michael was singing along with through Elly’s head unit.

But then she left him and Elly.

Then, too, did his grandmother, just a month later.

It was all happening too fast, and Michael felt out of control. Everything was bearing down on him -- his college classes, his job, the societal expectations of him, all of it -- and every day was a struggle to get through. He didn’t really have time to ever get on the road, to get back in control of the one aspect of his life that he’d loved most: Elly.

Spring break finally gave him the relief he needed, and he immediately spent six hours on the road, late at night, driving southbound. Deer proved no issue, not with Elly’s brakes, and the speed he was able to feel was thrilling. Not even the two hundred dollar speeding ticket dampened his spirits -- annoyed him a bit, sure -- but the speed that he was able to experience yet again, the control that he felt in the firm bucket seats that were still somehow more comfortable than the plusher seats in his old car, it brought a smile to his tired face even as he struggled silently with Milwaukee traffic once more.

She gave him control. The six speed transmission, with gears rowed through with the precision of a well-made rifle bolt, the well-tuned electric steering, the roar of the turbocharged engine. It provided a breeding ground for where he could think, he could be alone -- but in control of that loneliness. An escape to the stir crazy feelings of lingering in one place for too long, with the teasing temptations of every curve in the road to just go a little bit faster, to push a little bit further, to find the limit.

Even as he struggled when he looked in the mirror, realizing he didn’t want to be like him anymore, Elly didn’t care. When the girl who came back from a hospital trip one day cracked Elly’s bumper a few months later, she didn’t care.

She had just a few desires: to see new places, to feel in control, to go fast and to go far.

And Elly felt the exact same way, even with her scratched paint from the pebbles she knew she’d face on the road.

**Poetry Response**

I’ll be honest, I’ve mostly forgotten about what I read in *Poetry.* The reason for this is relatively simple, honestly: I don’t like poetry, I don’t enjoy it in the slightest. It’s not fun for me to read, it’s even less fun for me to write. I hate formal verse from the very, very bottom of my heart, I hate its rules, I hate having to follow it. I used *Poetry* just to try and find ideas of what something was supposed to look like, and everything that I had found was contradictory and confusing, it made no sense to me and it made writing my poetry even harder honestly.

Poetry, to me, is an unenjoyable artform. I’m not denying that it has power, or that it’s important, I’m just flatly stating that I truly hate it, more than any person I’ve ever met. It’s not the faults of the poets -- if there is anyone at fault that isn’t me, it’s those who design the curriculum for our middle and high schools and force students who don’t enjoy it to partake in it, further deepening their hatred of it.

**Poetry Self-Reflect**

I wrote the first things that came to mind, and I’ll be honest: I only wrote it because I hate to. I didn’t enjoy writing any of these poems, and I’ve struggled more writing them than I did in any of my Computer Science classes -- and I left that major behind for a reason. The formatting and the style of poetry makes no sense to my mind, and there’s no pleasure in writing it to me. It feels pretentious and overdone, it makes no sense, and I’m not writing it for myself. I hate poetry, I really, really, do. I’d much rather phone in any essay or write a thousand thousand word short stories than write a single poem ever.

**Overall Self-Reflect**

This has been an interesting semester for my writing, and I’m definitely glad that I’ve had this experience because it’s forced me to, at some level, try and actually grow as a writer rather than just write self-serving stuff. Admittedly, I haven’t changed a lot of what I’ve done with my short story so far, as it’s mostly grammar that I need to change it seems like. Part of this is due to how I write -- I write like I talk, so I use hyphens a lot as they best represent how I interject my words in a weird, messy stream of consciousness. Plus, I see it as better than overusing commas, and I know a lot of my grammatical mistakes came in my dialogue, which leads to the question of do I change my dialogue to be more proper, or to better reflect how we actually talk? I’m unsure.

**Manuscript Self-Reflect**

I’ll be honest? I didn’t really rewrite much for this manuscript, and I’m unsure if I want to. The biggest problem seems to be people wanting more, but I want to keep it under 2000 words as much as possible -- that’s the word limit of most short stories -- and I guess that’s just the problem with how I write. Much of what I was working on were, well, snippets of a grander story that plays out in my mind, and this short story was just a hyperfocus on one of those. I always find it fun to think about how much life would be different if we all had superpowers and were stuck fighting an unending evil, because, well. It combines my favorite things: DnD, and modern settings. I guess I’m a bit of a dork there.

The biggest thing that’s not working, then, is the fact that this is a short story. It’s supposed to be short. Besides that is how I write, with my hyphens and my ellipsis aplenty in dialogue, because I want to best reflect the awkwardness that occurs in a real conversation. As I mentioned in my last reflection, this is something that I suppose I need to decide on if I want to leave it due to it best reflecting how we talk or if I should change it to better look like what’s expected.

I’m not sure which would be a better decision, truth be told. I’m not sure if I even want to change it, as any change could break what I’ve got. I guess I’m just a bit confused on it all, but more than that? I’m proud of what I’ve written.