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Composition II

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Journal Entry #1: Literacy Narrative

I can’t remember ever being bad at reading. My family viewed education very highly, so every birthday, every Christmas, every occasion in which it is custom to give a gift, I received a book. Kind of bummed me out, too: what kid wants books all the time? It would have been nice to get a few toys…

My sister Julia, eleven years my senior, started the reading frenzy. She always did so well in school; her teachers’ only complaints were that she read while they were teaching. So when my brother and I were born (after she had warmed up to the idea of no longer being an only child), she passed down her vast collection of literature to us. My mother still tells the story of how, one day nearing our birth, she couldn’t find my sister. After running all over the house, panicking, she checked the attic. There was Julie, sitting quietly cross-legged with an old rag surrounded by stacks of her baby books. My mother, confused and very tired, asked what she was doing. Julie said, “I’m getting my books ready for the twins. They’re going to love reading just as much as I do.” (Sort of a cheesy story, but my mom really likes telling it, so what the heck.)

So my sister taught me how to enjoy reading, but as for writing, I didn’t really get into it until middle school. Prior to that, all of my teachers had stressed structured writing, which works for fifth-grade-level essays, but not much else. As a result, I thought writing was all about rules, assignments, grades, etc. It wasn’t until seventh grade, when I entered the liberating world of fan-fiction, that I actually started to enjoy writing. Creative writing was so different from essay writing that I didn’t actually connect them at first; I didn’t see my personal stories as “real writing.” (I still have trouble with seeing fan-fiction as “real writing,” due to the fact that it’s looked down upon, as most hobbies associated with teenage girls are. But I digress…)

Anyway, so after figuring out what I liked and disliked about writing, I was able to use it to my advantage: writing short stories for fun, writing for stress-relief in my (many, many) journals, writing concepts out in my own words to understand them. After a rocky start, I think I’d say that now I have a healthy appreciation for my own literacy.