

It'd been a thursday like many others. I woke up, bumbled about for a bit, getting my things sorted for school, and attempted to psych myself up on the bus-ride there.

“Things'll be fine..It's simple, just keep a straight face, and if someone asks you about your essay just shrug or something to that effect. You can certainly finish it later today, in about an hour or so, writing isn't that hard.”

It was the first writing of the year, and in my insurmountable arrogance and recalcitrance, I hadn't written a single word beyond some drivel that I wrote in approximately 30 minutes that physically repulsed me, as if my body were attempting to reject the reality that I somehow wrote such rubbish. I'd never been particularly good at writing. I'd get by, doing whatever essay was doled out to me and moving on, forgetting it within minutes, but ever since the beginning of freshman year, I'd lost that ability. I don't know why but it'd suddenly fallen from my grasp. I would open up a document, see the blank page, and my mind would quickly take to mimicking it. I'd sit for minutes, hours at a time looking at the document and not having a single clue what to write. This ailed me throughout the entire year, slowly dropping my English grade lower and lower until it was up to my ears, drowning me in anxiety.

But that was last year, and oh so much had changed over the summer, I joined a running team, I was more interested in playing guitar, I was around people that I liked more often, so of course this year would be different, yeah? Apparently not. As I walked into class 3 minutes late (I must've done something horrendous to bus drivers in a past life for them to have this much of a vendetta against me) I sat down, took out the necessary supplies, and sat there profusely sweating, anticipating a well-warranted look of disapproval from my teacher.

“Today we’re going to look at each other’s stories for a bit, so just take out your Chromebooks and go to Slate.”

Now, I wasn’t quite sure if I was happy about this outcome or not. One on hand, I needn’t meet her face to face and admit that nothing had prevented me from writing the story, I was simply being fickle. On the other, I now had to face the bombardment of people in my group attempting to coax out of me the location of my story.

“Where’s your story? Is it on Slate? How do you spell your name?” and so on and so forth, for about ten minutes. I then proceeded to scan other people’s stories without really comprehending the writings, the entire time just lamenting in my own stupidity in my mind. But this soon ended, and I went on to the next class. The rest of the day, and week, went on as usual. One would think that after having to undergo the mental stress of imagining your peers silently, and very vocally, judging you for not doing work would inspire you to do said work. Apparently not. More than two weeks had passed and I hadn’t written anything beyond my original rushed-out half-baked story. I felt overwhelmed by the work, and in a single moment of clarity, sat down, put away all distractions from the outside world, and began writing the essay. I took inspiration for the writing style namely from a comedian I had been listening to, Daniel Kitson. Everything was going marvelously, I was writing without stopping, thoughts were flowing from my brain, down to my arms and right through my fingers to the keyboard. It was like playing a symphony, except there was no music and was far less enjoyable. Nonetheless I was proud of myself for writing it all so quickly. I knew that I could write something if I wanted to, but just had trouble getting the drive. I looked at the essay and thought to myself

“Ah, yes, perfect. I see clearly now the actions that I took to create this distinguished piece of writing, and will certainly be able to perfectly recreate this process in the near future, acquiring me not only good grades but respect of the highest order.”

But I knew this simply just wasn't true. I knew that even though I had had this moment of clarity, that even though I had had the sudden unfathomable drive to write, and that even though I had had the pressure of the so called “daily grind” grated against me again and again - that I would be given another assignment and the entire cycle would start over again. I'd like to think that I'd learned a lesson from this experience, but in reality, I hadn't. And so I prepared for the next assignment to hit me and grind me down further.