Autobiography of a Writer

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The crayon wax wouldn't scrape off the hallway walls because the wallpaper was made of woven fabric. The red stained the strings that my mother began peeling from the walls. "You do not write on the walls! You hear me? That's what paper is for," she said over and over. My father was frustrated because this habit of mine was far from being broken. All around the house, my name was scribbled on surfaces. The lampshades bore my name and the year written inside them. The back of the couch cushions could be flipped over to reveal a few hastily written letters in blue pen ink. Even the low ceilings bore marks of my existence.

It wasn't that I was purposefully trying to destroy the house—I simply felt an overwhelming compulsion to understand who I was and document my whereabouts. As time passed, I graduated to paper, though I never fully overcame the urge to leave my creative signature on the world around me.

My mediums were abundant, if unconventional. Without papyrus scrolls or a typewriter, I used whatever I could find to etch my stories. My grandmother was one of the few who recognized my potential. She sat me down and taught me how to write a story. Realizing my imagination was unruly, she guided me to blank sheets of paper and asked for my words. As I spoke of the animals that lived in my mind, she transcribed my tales. Then she handed me the finished story, and I illustrated it with crayons. We stapled the school paper sheets together and called it a book. For the first time, I felt accomplished. My writing was in its infancy, my spelling immature, but I had written my first story.

As I grew, my imagination often overtook me. Children in kindergarten thought I was strange and outlandish because I told elaborate stories about things that had never happened. I longed to be an adult, to have experiences worth sharing. In my desire to emulate that, I pretended. I told my classmates about my boyfriend, Chris, and described

the feeling of his kiss. I lied so vividly I almost believed the stories myself. These fabrications weren't born of malice—they were my attempts to craft a reality I hadn't yet lived.

In middle school, my English teacher assigned an autobiography. She wanted to know the basics—my address, my first pet, my mother's occupation. But I wasn't interested in recounting trivial details. It wasn't my address or my circumstances. Instead, I asked myself, *Who am I? What have I been? What have I done?* In my stories, I had been everything, done everything, and seen it all.

I typed my autobiography as an expression of who I saw myself to be, crafting it with care. Proud of my work, I handed it in, dreaming of recognition or praise. Instead, I was pulled aside by the teacher's assistant and told to rewrite it. My creative effort was deemed "off-topic," and Mrs. Bullock assigned me a failing grade. The shame of that moment stung deeply. What I saw as a portrait of my essence had been dismissed as a failed story. That day, I turned my back on academic structures like the one Mrs. Bullock embodied, deciding instead to write as I pleased, even if it made me peculiar.

At 13, I began writing daily, trying to make sense of who I was. I carried a folded piece of school paper in my pocket, jotting down notes whenever inspiration struck. My poetry brimmed with adolescent angst, begging for understanding. My parents weren't my friends, and my friends were dramatic. For the first time, my writing reflected an attempt to understand real emotions rather than an imagined world.

By high school, I fell in love for the first time. Struggling to articulate my feelings, I turned to writing. I thought back to the fairy tales I had read as a child, filled with whimsical depictions of love that seemed unattainable. Determined to write something true, I filled pages with declarations like, "If love isn't real in the other fairy tales, it's real in this one." But over time, my stories became less about me and more about him. My identity diluted, my inner storyteller jaded.

Adulthood brought disillusionment and pain. My writing turned darker as I sought to organize my thoughts and understand the world around me. I would tell people I was a writer, though I rarely finished anything. After sleepless nights, I'd wake to find scraps of paper littering the floor, scrawled with words I didn't remember writing. I often addressed them to an unknown "you."

Nightmares invaded my sleep, and my stories foreign to me. I began to fear my own imagination. But then, something shifted. Music began to guide me. A song would come on the radio and transport me to a memory. These songs became a soundtrack, and the story they inspired was authentically mine. For the first time, I wasn't writing nightmares, fantasies, or someone else's story. I was writing the truth. I called it *Fold Fold Friend*.
I haven't picked up a crayon in years, but I've created a space in my bedroom to honor the child I once was. My writing desk has become a piece of art. I use it to jot down phrases that won't leave my head or sketch faces of people who imprint themselves on my mind. This desk reminds me how vital expression is to my existence.

I don't suppress my creativity anymore. I let it flow freely. After spending years longing for adulthood and authority over my experiences, I don't take that freedom for granted. If I want to tell a story, I will—whether in my dreams or on my writing desk.
My first publication will be dedicated to Mrs. Bullock. Inside, I'll write:
To the woman who failed me in English, I will spend my life trying to make it up to you.