On Becoming a Writer: Collected Stories

Description

Title: On Becoming a Writer: Collected Stories

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Abstract: This project considers the role of the creative writing teacher in the development of the writer’s identity. Drawing from a/r/tography and fiction-based research, this thesis is written in the form of a novel and presented as an exemplar of arts-based qualitative inquiry in educational research. The novel is organized in a series of stories that follow the life of a young woman named Mona and are about the people she meets, the stories she writes, the places she ends up, and who she becomes along the way. This project is informed by its pilot study, which drew from a narrative approach and included semi-structured interviews where participants were asked to share stories on their becoming a writer. The emergent themes from the pilot study fell within one of two opposing categories: The first being factors that prevented one’s sense of becoming and; the second describing factors that facilitated one’s sense of becoming. The findings from the pilot study were then synthesized into literary themes and are presented in the stories, On Becoming a Writer. This project adds to the growing number of fictional texts as educational research and is presented as an alternative to the standard graduate thesis. This approach seeks to engage its readers to participate in the lives of writers and their stories, and may serve as a resource for teachers of aspiring writers.
After telling the story of how he became the writer he is today, King devotes the second half of the book to sharing his writing strategies, like his suggestion that you should write for your “Ideal Reader”: “I think that every novelist has a single ideal reader; that at various points during the composition of a story, the writer is thinking, ‘I wonder what he/she will think when he/she reads this part?’ You see I’m trying in all my stories to get the feeling of the actual life across -- not to just depict life -- or criticize it -- but to actually make it alive. So that when you have read something by me you actually experience the thing. The prolific science-fiction author Ray Bradbury collected the lessons he had learned about the craft during his long and successful career in Zen in the Art of Writing. Bradbury’s advice? Since then, it’s become the most popular book about writing ever written, pulling in over 1000 reviews on Amazon and selling God only knows how many copies. Here’s why  But don’t take my word for it. Below, I’ve collected a monster list of my favorite quotes from the book, and I also wrote down some of my own thoughts on exactly how they apply to bloggers. If you enjoy them, grab yourself a copy of On Writing over at Amazon (affiliate link). Including stories about your life in your blog post is fine and dandy, especially if those stories are interesting, but most bloggers suffer not from a lack of stories but from an extravagance of them, writing about little nothings that happened to them and somehow expecting these boring trivialities to make them famous. Sorry, but it doesn’t work that way. 10. Write with the door closed. I see this happen all the time. Writers often know what the beginning and the end of their stories are, but the middle — which is actually most of the whole book — gets murky. So they start asking for opinions. They reach out to their tribes and say something like, “I’m not sure where to go with this story. What do you think?” Your tribe is important enough that it gets its own item on this list, but your story is yours until you’re ready for readers. This one is important: There isn’t a whole lot you can do toward becoming a writer if you don’t finish a manuscript. Your writer brain will throw up shiny new ideas when the going gets rough on your work-in-progress. Write them down, but stay focused on your story. Remember when it was your shiny new idea and keep writing. 3. “How to Become a Writer” by Lorrie Moore. Told in the second person point of view, this story from Moore’s debut anthology Self-Help takes an honest look at the inner life of a struggling artist. Through the use of an unusual POV, the author manages to turn her reader into a confidante — making it abundantly clear that the ‘you’ the narrator is speaking about is actually herself. Here, we’ve collected 21 of the best short story collections — along with the standout story in each volume. 11. A Manual for Cleaning Women by Lucia Berlin. This collection of twelve short stories by award-winning writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie takes place in Nigeria, the author’s birthplace, as well as the United States. I first wanted to become a writer because I read those great books (you know the ones: Great Expectations and Harry Potter and Les Miserables and On the Road) and thought, “Wouldn’t it be wonderful to do this all day, to spend your afternoons having conversations with interesting characters and dealing with the deep challenges of the soul?” The long meandering walks. The hours reading poetry and story collections and novels…. These things are your becoming.” —Cheryl Strayed. 10 Steps to Becoming a Writer. You must become a writer. In fact, you never cease becoming, because you never stop learning how to write. Even now, I am becoming a writer. And so are you.” —Joe Bunting. Why do you want to become a writer? Let us know if the comments section.