



Come Write Here

Eddi's Exposition Expedition



An Adult Writer's Guide for Childhood Creativity

Come Write Here:

Eddi's Exposition Expedition

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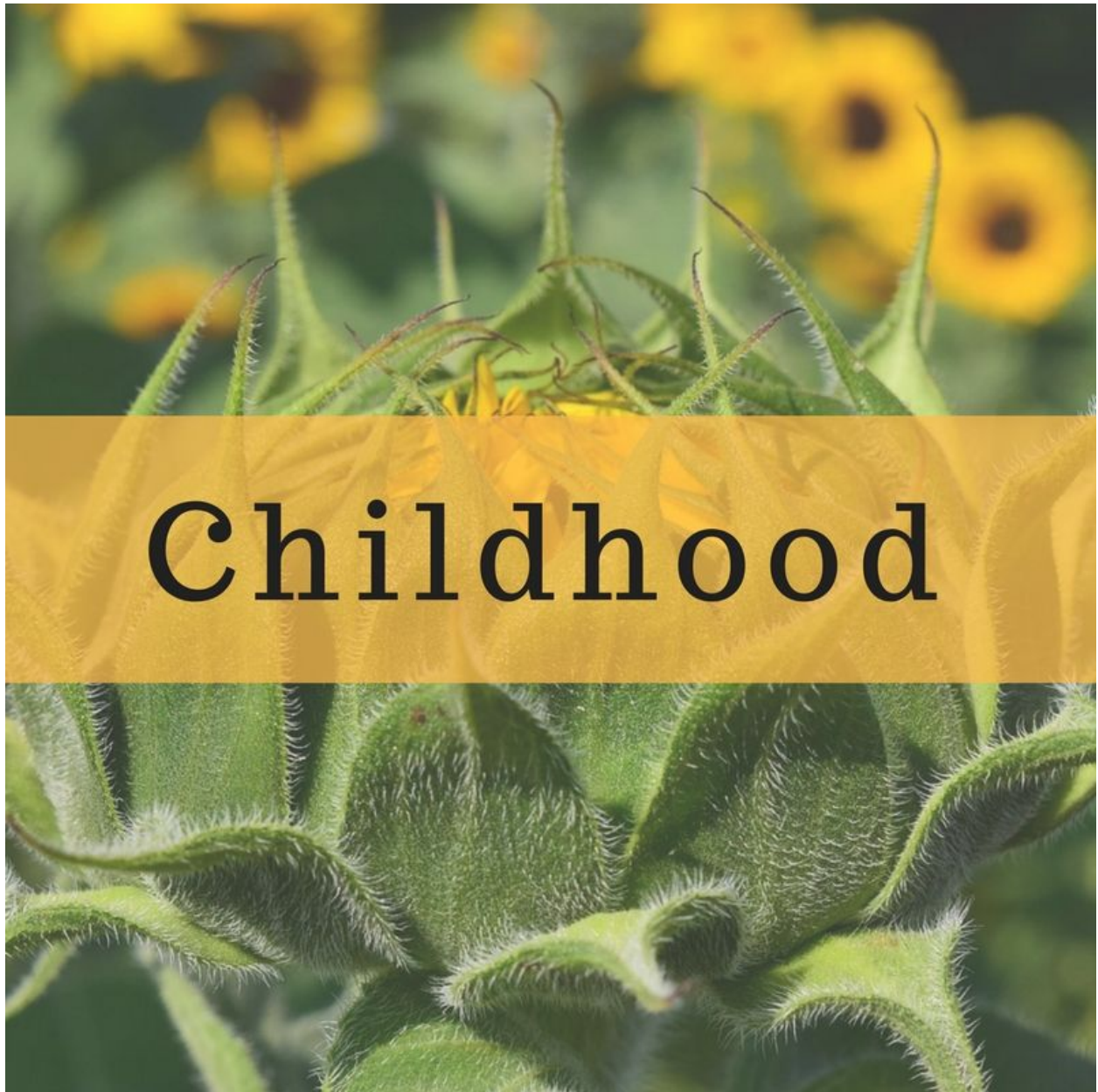
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Once upon a time, there was a little girl named Eddi, who loved to read. She spent every free moment with a book in her hand. In the spring, Eddi read in the garden to smell the scent of the freshly bloomed flowers as she envisioned the fairies of her stories dancing around her. In the winter, Eddi read mystery novels in the attic among old chests and boxes. She read among the dust bunnies in the basement, under the creaky stairs, engulfed in her grandpa's favorite recliner, hiding in her magic treehouse, hanging upside down from her playset, and relaxing under the protection of her pillow fort—Eddi read anywhere and everywhere she could. That is, until one day, she had read everything in her parents' library. She scanned the shelves carefully for a fresh story to feast her eyes on, but there was absolutely nothing new. In a fit of frustration, Eddi decided that if she couldn't find anything else to read, she would just have to write something herself.

With a brand new notebook and great deal of ambition, she set out for the garden to write her first story. Pencil poised above the blank page, she sat and waited for inspiration to strike, but nothing came to mind. Thinking that a change of scenery may do the trick, she tried the attic. But again, her mind was blank. Eddi went to all of her favorite reading places, but still she could not write.

Then another idea popped into her head: Eddi should explore the world, meet some of the best writers, and ask them where they think is the best place to write.

She started her exposition expedition immediately. The journey continued as she grew through the stages of her life—all the while, hoping to grow as an author.





To start her expedition, Eddi left her favorite reading spots to walk along Ponce Inlet, a nearby beach in Florida, where she met Rebecca the Sandpiper.

Ponce Inlet's Offer: Sea-Salt-Encrusted Creativity

It's easy to forget that the ocean is filled with limitless amounts of energy and inspiration. We've become so numb to its endless sprawl and mysticism. The sea is king; it takes up the majority of our planet. If we take a step back and connect with the pristine energy it emits, we can be more in tune with the things we create.

I was never much of an ocean person before I moved to Florida. I acknowledged the existence of the sea, but I hated visiting the beach. I was frustrated by the immortality of the sand and how it seemed to make its way into everything. The possibility of sharks terrified me, so I never swam. I was perfectly fine with watching the waves from a distance, preferably miles and miles away from the shore.

Everything changed when my parents moved from Raleigh, North Carolina to Daytona Beach, Florida during my freshman year of college. I wasn't even able to say goodbye to my beloved places and friends, and I lost my sense of home.

During my first summer in Florida, I spent my days moping and refusing to get out of bed. I thought if I complained enough, my parents would give in and move back to my beloved North Carolina (which obviously wasn't the case). I wasted an entire summer avoiding the jungle-esque outdoors, and I even renamed Florida "The Godless Wasteland."

I was initially reluctant when returning to Florida for a new summer, but I decided I was going to make a change by exploring as much as possible, which is how I stumbled on a newly beloved place: Ponce Inlet.

Ponce Inlet, a sleepy town located on the tip of a coastal peninsula on the eastern side of Florida, is famous for its picturesque beaches and proudly calls itself the home of the Ponce de Leon Inlet Light Station, Florida's tallest lighthouse.¹

I decided to create a ritual of visiting the beach almost every day during that summer. Sure, I wasn't much of a beach bum, but I knew Florida shorelines were stunning and I could potentially find inspiration and solace from the ocean.

When I was researching places to explore, I noticed Ponce Inlet was the closest and most convenient beach to me. Every day, I would head out to the beach and sit on top of a picnic table on the edge of the shore, iced coffee in hand. Thanks to the picnic table, I didn't have to deal with sand, and I had a perfect, unobstructed view of the sea's mass. After observing the endless horizon and eternal loop of the waves, I picked up my pen and started writing.

My goal when writing here was to connect the endless sprawl of the ocean's surface with the limitless opportunities of creation. I wasn't striving for perfection—I just needed an outlet to transfer this newly-found overflow of inspiration.

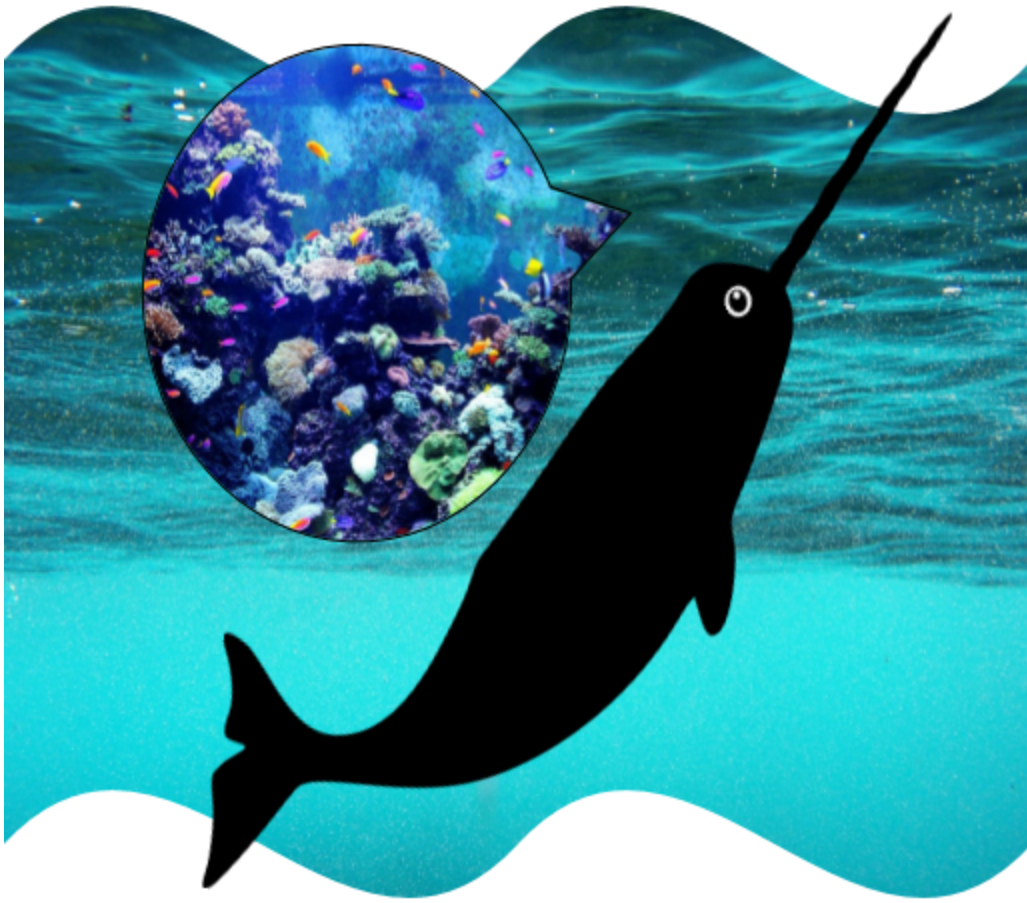
As the summer burned on and I felt more and more inspired, I decided to head out onto the beach. This was a huge deal for *me*—the former beach skeptic. I bought a special sand repellant beach mat and formulated a routine of bagging my shoes so I wouldn't track sand. I meditated a bit on the squish of the sand, absorbing both the sun's energy and the power of the waves. I remember feeling a bit self-conscious and worried that I was becoming too hippie-esque. However, this feeling disappeared when I reminded myself that this ritual was improving my creative mindset.

Whenever I wrote on a picnic table, beach mat, jetty, or pier in Ponce Inlet, I had a constant view of the bright orange lighthouse. I would often stare at it, reminding myself that it guided a famous writer in the past. Stephen Crane, a writer in the late 1800s, was an adventurer and frequently put himself in dangerous or exotic situations. In 1896, he boarded the *SS Commodore* in Jacksonville, Florida and headed to Cuba. Unfortunately, the ship hit a sandbar and wrecked a few miles off the shore leaving Crane and three others stranded on a lifeboat. After spending a day and a half in the tiny dinghy, they began to lose hope until they saw the beacon of a lighthouse.

The Ponce de Leon Inlet Light Station saved the men in the night and led them back to the shore. Crane was struck by this occurrence, causing him to write the short story "The Open Boat" and it was later regarded as one of the defining pieces of realist literature.

"The Open Boat" changed my outlook on the shores of Ponce Inlet. At one point, I tried to find the exact spot where Crane and the crew reached land. I stared at the waves, thinking about how they provided both me and Crane inspiration with a gap of over one hundred years. Obviously, the ocean was less forgiving to Crane and his experience.

When you take a step back and realize that there is a looming spiritual aspect of the ocean, it can provide loads of inspiration. Ponce Inlet, a quiet and serene area where you can connect with such a large mass of energy, is the ideal place to write.



Then it started to rain, so Eddi couldn't go to the beach to write, but that didn't stop her! Allie the Narwhal helped her to find the next best place to observe water and marine life: the aquarium.

Under the Sea

As writers, we dread writer's block. We've all experienced sitting at our desks when out of nowhere, our inspiration and motivation disappear. Poof, gone. Frustrating as this may be, there are ways to solve this issue. Some people need brain food, some need a central line of coffee, and some need to take a break. However, a change of scenery is what helps me the most.

The options for where to write are endless. Libraries are quiet with plenty of workspace and books to help with research; coffee shops provide a never-ending supply of caffeine; your own house or office has the benefit of comfort. The latter is nice because you can lie in bed and wear cozy pajamas. However, some of your best writing may take place in obscure locations. For instance, have you ever thought of taking your laptop or notebook and hunkering down in an aquarium? Probably not, but hear me out. Not all aquariums are suited for our purposes. You need a place to comfortably sit, a view of the fish, and a spot that is fairly quiet and lacks screaming children. If you're a magical author who is able to write standing up, surrounded by noise, feel free to disregard what I've just said—but for the rest of us, keep this in mind when selecting a location.

After you've chosen your spot and settled down, it's time to write. Pull out your notebook and writing utensil or your laptop. An aquarium provides inspiration in a few ways. People-watching is easy since you're in a public space. Do you need character inspiration? There are countless visitors that can suit your needs. Keep an eye on the mother attentively watching her children, the teenager sulking in the corner, the employee energetically spouting information about marine life, and the little girl with her face pressed to the aquarium glass. Even jotting down these observations can add to your writing or motivate you to start anew.

This is a pleasant spot to focus your mind too. If background noise bothers you, bring a pair of headphones along so you can listen to your own soundtrack and watch the fish. Once you're settled, look through the glass. There's something peaceful about the way life works in an aquarium. Each fish swims calmly in its environment, performing an oceanic dance as it interacts with others. For them, life is simple. It's easy to get lost watching their movements as they traverse their enormous tank. The longer you watch, the more you notice. The tiny starfish creeping along the sandy floor, the blue tang hiding amongst the coral, and even a small baby shark repeatedly circling the

length of the tank. As your mind wanders, let your hand flow freely, jotting down thoughts, observations, plots, and ideas.

Aquariums are often located within zoos, and even if they are not, tasty snacks will be readily available. If you get hungry or thirsty, you can grab something to eat as long as you don't mind paying inflated prices. It may not be the healthiest food, but eating junk food will put you in a better mood to write (especially if you get a sugar rush from candy).

Getting antsy? Feet falling asleep? At an aquarium, there's no need to worry. There's plenty of room to get up and move around if you need to. Get up and walk around the building, look at the different exhibits, observe the fish, use the restroom. After this, it's important to get back to your writing—you don't want to be distracted for too long. If you get bored of sitting in one spot, there are other areas you can move to that provide different views. Even a change of scenery within your new writing space can be helpful in your process.

I enjoy visiting the aquarium because it reminds me of when I was a kid. The vivid colors are beautiful to look at, and they calm my mind. We're all different though. If you can only work in silent spaces while sitting at a desk, this space probably isn't best for you. Do you thrive while surrounded by movement and action? If you answered yes, go to an aquarium right now. If you're able to churn out quality writing, the few bucks you'll have to shell out to get in will be repaid tenfold when you're a famous author one day.

Now, go out there and write! Armed with a perfect location and motivation, dive under the sea and do your best.



Eddi thought herself a flipper away from mermaidhood when she left Allie the Narwhal in the aquarium, so she decided to take a hike to get her land legs back. It was in the woods where she met Olivia the Squirrel, who took her to a forgotten bench and showed Eddi some picturesque views and an inspiring place to write.

A Simple Bench on the Hickory Creek Trailhead

The best place to write is in a location that only involves the writer and nature—a place where there are no distractions, where you can be alone. This setting allows ideas to develop and expand into narratives. Peace and quiet is the ideal environment to allow thoughts to flow and to think deeply about any topic in the world, imaginary or real. If your environment is natural, your thought process and writing will be too. Sitting down and relaxing is important as well. The dense areas of the Forest Preserve of Will County, Illinois are home to the best place for any type of writer to work. Every acre contains its own unique, natural features, and the area offers you the opportunity to fish, skate, and kayak on its many ponds; swing across the playground monkey bars; enjoy a meal in a shaded picnic shelter; spend the night at a campsite; walk your dog in one of three dog parks; or sled down the many hills. Within these preserved areas lie over 116 miles of biking, running, horseback riding, and hiking trails.¹ Among the many miles of forest and trails lies a small bench that takes a sense of adventure to find and offers the perfect place to take a seat and get to writing.

To begin, deciding on the mode of transportation for this adventure is critical. Walking offers a calm and slow experience, allowing time to take in all of the surroundings. Biking offers an entirely different experience. As you bike through the trails to the destination, your surroundings fly by, and the refreshing wind flows past your face and hair. Old Plank Trail cuts through the little downtown area of Frankfort, Illinois. The paved gray trail climbs up, over, and down the triangle bridge before continuing on the straight path for two miles. Surrounded by short trees and suburban neighborhoods, bike riders, walkers, runners, roller bladers, and any other park-goers are given the choice to continue straight along the same path or branch off to the right onto the Hickory Creek Trailhead. The paved, black trail winds into the forest, and the bright, yellow painted line guides you along the way. On sunny days, bright lights peek through the branches of the trees, shining light on the path ahead. On gloomy days, the forest is dark and quiet, letting the yellow line show where the trail is heading next. Hill after hill and turn after turn, the trail finally straightens out and leads to a short metal bridge. From the perspective of standing on the trail, the bridge seems to be constructed over a thin pond that does not call for much attention; however, it is more than it seems to be. Crossing over the bridge leads to more twists and turns in the forest, but diverting off the trail brings you to something unexpected. Stepping off the trail and walking around the dense bushes and trees surrounding the bridge and pond leads to a sharp

turn along what seems to be the edge of the pond. Around the corner, your view changes: the pond has expanded into a much larger body of water enclosed by the neighboring forest. No trail is to be seen, but across the way, there is a park bench just wide enough for two people.

At first glance, this bench is nothing special. It is the surroundings and the adventure to get there that make it notable. Although rusted and old, this bench is not worn from overuse; rather, it seems like this bench does not have many frequent visitors. Surrounded by the dense forest and large pond, the rusted, chipped bench seems to be nothing more than a grain of sand on a beach, but it is so much more to those who choose to wander over to it. Those who undertake the adventure to get to the bench find themselves in a sanctuary, where they have time to think about anything they wish. Those that are writers can use these thoughts as inspiration. The experience of getting to the location and spending time there makes a person understand that it is a place of solitude and serenity—a combination that creates an ideal location for a creative mind to write.



Olivia the Squirrel said goodbye and disappeared with a swish of her fluffy brown tail, leaving Eddi to find her way out of the dense forest alone. She turned around to retrace her steps back up the path that had led her to the bench, but her foot got caught on some uneven ground. Before she knew it, she was tumbling head over heels down some sort of hole. It wasn't until she reached the bottom that she realized this place was the home of Jessi the Rabbit.

Down the Rabbit Hole

You remind me of a little girl named Alice that my grandpa used to tell me stories about:

“But I don’t want to go among mad people,” Alice remarked.

“Oh, you can’t help that,” said the Cat. “We’re all mad here. I’m mad. You’re mad.”

“How do you know I’m mad?” said Alice.

“You must be,” said the Cat, “or you wouldn’t have come here.”¹

So you must be mad if you’re a writer looking for advice on where to write in order to discover how to write; you must be, or you wouldn’t have come here. But allow me to guide you this way and that way until you’ve found where you want to go in your story. Whether it is through the phraseology and history of tunnels to mystic realities or the methodology by which to dig your own, let us get lost down the rabbit hole—for this is the only way to create a wonderland.

The beloved phrase, “down the rabbit hole,” originated from Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and was made popular by multiple Disney renditions of the children’s book. The term in such contexts means to become lost and enveloped in a strange, imaginary place—an alternate reality of sorts. However, the expression has recently taken on a new meaning. Kathryn Schulz, a New Yorker journalist, defines this new connotative interpretation well: “When we say that we fell down the rabbit hole. . . We mean that we got interested in something to the point of distraction—usually by accident, and usually to a degree that the subject in question might not seem to merit.” In her article, Schulz continues by replacing Carroll’s esteemed idiom with something more applicable to her own modern reading.² As an illustration, take “I went down the rabbit hole looking for easy homemade recipes.” The speaker does not mean they were lost in a psychedelic world looking for easy recipes, rather that they had exhausted an unfathomable degree of energy into this inessential task. Nevertheless, the true etymology of this saying goes back further than contemporary jargon or even Carroll. It literally means exploring the home of a rabbit, which technically isn’t very deep or inspiring. Regardless, when writing down in the rabbit hole, I suggest the application of Carroll’s terminology—what better way to pen an alternate reality than to visit one yourself?

Now we must construct the portal, since we are not all lucky enough to stumble upon them like a certain charming, curious little girl we know. The first step is to

question routine and clear the mind, so as to forget the definitive things in life: “If I had a world of my own, everything would be nonsense. Nothing would be what it is, because everything would be what it isn't. And contrary wise, what is, it wouldn't be. And what it wouldn't be, it would. You see?”¹ When there are no presuppositions or fundamental laws to violate, a writer can easily make rules of their own without fear of being perceived as nonsensical. Next, you must chase the wild idea (whether sensible or not). As Alice ran after the late, time-telling rabbit, you must pursue this seemingly ludicrous concept with comparable vigor and curiosity. Finally, you must fall down the rabbit hole. With nothing to hold on to, with no one to help, with nothing to distract you from the pure sensation of falling into an idea, you may now truly lose your mind and pen to an alternate reality. You must take in every detail, develop every thought, and write everything down. Perhaps, once you have followed that original idea, you too may find yourself in a wonderland of your own manifested imagination. You'll know you're there when your pen begins to twitch like it's alive; when your cup of coffee starts to look more like an ink pot; when your surroundings, unbeknownst to you, suddenly morph into a wondrous world—the product of your own ingenuity.

I hope you've found what you were looking for, the reason why you've come here. I've offered my best: history, literature, and advice. But it is up to you to navigate such unfamiliar territory, to understand what is “curiouser and curiouser.”¹ For you see, the only way to write is to embrace the madness and fall deep into the rabbit hole of creation. Only then can you really make a wonderland of your own.



As Eddi climbed up and out of the rabbit hole, she found herself in an European-looking city with a breathtaking view of the Missouri River—Hermann, Missouri— where she met Stephen the Eagle.

Hermann, Missouri: a Picturesque Town Lost in Time

Just as writing is as unique as its author, so is the environment a writer chooses. Each writer feels inspired in a space that is conducive to the topic. Some writers prefer their local café, library, or a familiar desk in a comfy chair at home. Henry David Thoreau thrived in a natural setting, and Hemingway preferred to stand up.¹ It is the environment in which these authors write that it is able to transport them into their own worlds and unleash their creativity. I am more at ease when I am surrounded by the sounds, sights, and smells of a quaint town where 19th century brick buildings hug the sidewalk, reminiscent of the European style in Germany: Hermann, MO.

Hermann, a small town hidden in the Missouri River Valley, has a fascinating history. The residents and the Germans who visit believe that Hermann and its encompassing landscape strongly resemble the Rhine Valley. The similarities are not coincidental, but by design. During the early 1800s, Philadelphia Germans, becoming increasingly displeased with how their countrymen were being integrated into American society, decided to carve their own path in the untouched West. The inspired German Americans had two main goals: establish a town and make it “German in every particular” way.² Luckily for them, their vision became reality.

In 1837, George Bayer, a schoolteacher, purchased 11,000 acres of Missouri’s rugged terrain that the settlers could call home. The thousands of acres contained steep cliffs, hills after hills, and woods still left untouched. Back east in Philadelphia, the naive Germans did not realize the tremendous amount of work that had yet to be done.

When the first German settlers reached the site of their new town, their grand vision of a sprawling, magnificent settlement quickly faded. Nonetheless, they kept focused on their dream and planted vineyards on the rocky hillsides. By the end of the 19th century, Hermann became home to Stone Hill Winery, the second largest winery in the young country. Hermann quickly filled with wineries and became a targeted river port with taverns around every corner.

However, good times came to an end. Anti-German sentiment following World War I and the Volstead Act put Hermann back in the shadows of history. Prohibition and the Great Depression sent the town even further backwards into economic and social hardship. These apparent disasters acted as a silver lining because the town being in economic ruin without any money to modernize meant that it would remain as close to the original settlers’ vision as possible.

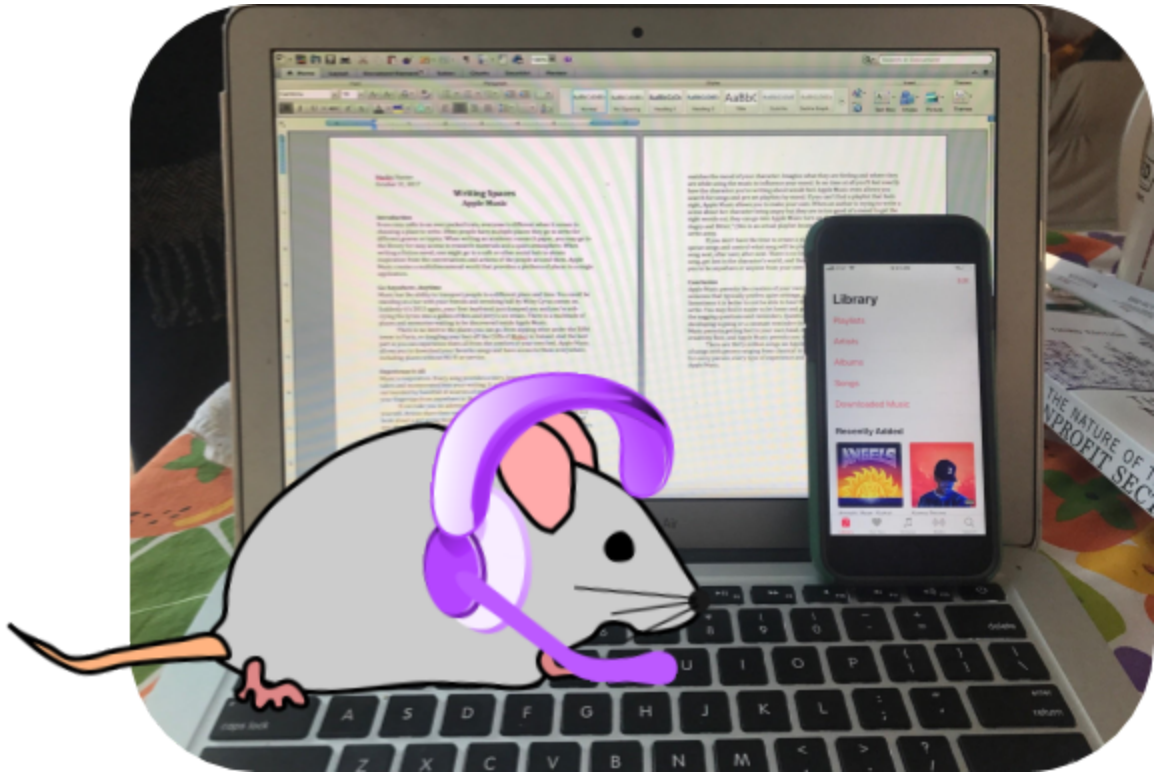
A writer is influenced by his or her environment. I like being connected to the past as I write. The views of the mighty Missouri and the old town offer a sense of serenity to my mind and allow me to write in a way that I prefer.

Imagine this: You sit on a wooden bench on top of a hill overlooking a town lost in time. The encompassing hills and woods are wrapped in hues of orange and amber, the colors of fall. A clear blue sky reaches as far as the eye can see. The smell and sight of smoke from the chimney tops cast a swirl of white puffs into the clear, brisk air. A rumbling train blowing its whistle can be heard above the chiming church bells. As I'm captivated by the view, sounds, and smells, I become lost in time. I recall the history of the town, the fortunate and the unfortunate turn of events, and the way those incidents shaped so much of the town's mores. It is through the winding cobblestone streets where the ghosts of the past dance. The legend of the first settlers who came to an untouched land to make it their home and the countless memories of those who followed in their footsteps remain vital. Their stories may be tucked away in the rising sun, in the glowing moon, and in the vineyards, but they have not vanished. The tales stay asleep, dormant, waiting for the writer to come along and pull back the curtain. Now, I'm no great writer and most likely never will be. but, in Hermann, I am able to write with history as a guide. I pull back the curtain and write those unwritten legends.

If you are ever fortunate enough to find yourself in the Missouri area and desire to taste a slice of the past, I invite you to take the journey to Hermann, Missouri, a small town with a big history. Use any part of the town as a writing space, and don't be afraid to let the memories of the past sneak into your imagination. If I have learned one thing in my young writing journey, it is that history is alive and guides the present.



Young Adulthood



As she grew up, Eddi continued to search for the perfect place to write. She kept visiting new places in search of inspiration, but in between stops, she happened to hear the faint sounds of music in the distance. She followed her ears to meet a new friend: Maddy the Mouse.

The Virtual World of Apple Music

From a cozy café to an over-packed train, everyone is different when it comes to choosing a place to write. Often, people have multiple places they go to write for different genres or topics. When writing an academic research paper, you may go to the library for easy access to research materials and a quiet atmosphere. When writing a fiction novel, you might go to a café or other kind of social hub to obtain inspiration from the conversations and actions of the people around you. Apple Music creates a multidimensional world that provides a plethora of places in a single application.

Music has the ability to transport people to a different place and time. You could be standing at a bar with your friends and “Wrecking Ball,” by Miley Cyrus, comes on. Suddenly it’s 2013 again; your first boyfriend just dumped you; and you’re sob-crying the lyrics into a gallon of Ben and Jerry’s ice cream. There are a multitude of places and memories waiting to be discovered inside Apple Music.

There is no limit to the places you can go, from sipping wine under the Eiffel Tower in Paris to dangling your feet off the Cliffs of Moher in Ireland. The best part is you can experience them all from the comfort of your own bed. You can download your favorite songs and have access to them everywhere, including locations without Wi-Fi or cellular service.

Music is inspiration. Every song provides a story, lesson, or concept that can be taken and incorporated into your writing. It is like sitting in a library writing a book, surrounded by hundred of sources of inspiration at your fingertips from anywhere in the world.

Music can take you on adventures and show you experiences you’ve never had before. Artists share their experiences with you through their songs. If you are writing a book about a girl going through a breakup but you have never experienced one, you could listen to “Someone Like You.” You would be transported by Adele’s haunting, soulful voice; feel the pain within her tone and in the words she sings; experience the story of heartbreak and betrayal. Each song is like sitting down and having a personal one-on-one interview with the artist about themselves and their stories. Let the stories the artists convey be a source of inspiration.

Having trouble getting in a character’s head? If you can’t get in the right mood to write a scene, pick a song that matches the mood of your character. Imagine what they are feeling and where they are while using the music to influence your mood. In no time at all, you’ll feel exactly how the character you’re writing about would feel. You can even

search for songs and preset playlists by mood. If you can't find a playlist that feels right, you can make your own. When you are trying to write a scene about a character being angry but you're in too good of a mood to get the right words out, go into Apple Music and turn on the preset playlist, "Sad, Angry and Bitter," get mad, and write away.

If you don't have the time to create a playlist, queue songs and control what will be played next, the song after next, and the song next after that. There is no limit to the possibilities. Get lost in the song, get lost in the character's world, and then write about it. Write about anywhere or anyone from the comfort of your own bedroom.

Apple Music permits the creation of your own ideal environment. Even if you are someone who typically prefers quiet settings, give the world of Apple Music a try. Sometimes it is better to not be able to hear the voice in your head when trying to write. You may find it easier to let loose and get your ideas down on paper without the nagging questions like where you are in the middle of developing a scene or a constant reminder that "i" goes before 'e' except after 'c'." Music allows you to get lost in your own head, drowning out the voices and letting the creativity flow.

There are thirty million songs on Apple Music, encompassing a wide variety of genres ranging from classical to death metal. There is at least one song for every person, every type of experience and millions of untold stories waiting in the virtual world of Apple Music.



Eddi was jamming out to some of Maddy the Mouse’s suggested playlist when she stumbled across MaKayla the Fox, who explained that a physical place is great inspiration for an author too. They stepped off the path together and headed downhill towards a bridge—a place MaKayla prefers over all the coffee shops in the world.

Writing from Under

Coffee shops have no soul. Don't get me wrong, I've known many writers who can sit down with a latte at the nearest anti-Starbucks hipster brew joint and churn out word after word. If this is your writing spot, I apologize. I don't write to offend. It just isn't mine.

I can't concentrate in a sea of voices like some people can. White noise is great, but tuning out the conversation of people sitting next to you is not as easy as ignoring the angry roar of a bar, or a protest, or maybe a passionate dissent from fans at a sporting event. The conversations in a coffee shop are intelligible. The words can be neatly plucked from the quiet background noise consisting of ordering and hushed chatter. Sometimes those words end up typed on my screen, and I am left distracted from my work.

In a perfect world, maybe the conversations of strangers would be inspiring, and maybe sometimes that is true. In my reality, however, the snippets of dialogue are very specific to the coffee shop "type," which will never be as inspiring to me as what I collect on the streets at weird hours of the night. I like to see humanity as it is, not as it pretends to be— drawing me to certain structures that offer a greater understanding of the dirt.

My favorite places to slam out some sentences is under this old bridge in my town. I'll have my frap when I'm done.

It's a small bridge and a rural one at that. Not my first choice of bridges, but a bridge nonetheless. It's an urban landmark imposed on nature. It runs over a dried-out creek bed, which is where I make myself at home. The asphalt fades into gravel, from one road to a smaller one. The sound of cars passing over reverberates in the tunnel, and sometimes pebbles drop off the edges. The cars are few and far between, which leaves only the sound of rustling leaves and birds singing in the distance.

There is no Wi-Fi or power outlets under the bridge. A charged computer and a Word document suit me just fine. Sometimes I bring a notebook and pencil (for poetry only), and bask in the warmth of nostalgia. The distractions are limited to the vibration of cars as they pass overhead, which frankly tend to be a wake-up call. Nothing incites productivity like adrenaline, a fact that all procrastinators will attest to. I love the juxtaposition of the peaceful sounds of nature and the violent interruptions. The rural scene framed by the end of the tunnel makes it seem like a well-lit landscape painting in a dark exhibit. It conflicts with the other forms of art that line the concrete walls.

The graffiti on the walls of the bridge is art. Graffiti inspires me more than strangers' conversations ever will. Spray paint is the poised fingers on the keyboard for someone else's rhetoric. The stakes are higher, and the words carry a profound weight. Protest, even if it is obscene, appeals to me. What drives someone to slander on concrete? Who do they think will see it? Certainly, I am not the intended audience.

This is the place I like to wrap myself in, because I think of it as a breeding ground for creativity. Writing is, in my opinion, a textual snapshot of human experience. Surrounded by juxtaposing ideas, I try to take someone else's headspace. I value perspectives, especially in writing prose, and so this space appeals to me. While another human would be distracting to my typing, I still feel connected to humanity here.

My suggestion to anyone with writer's block is to find a bridge, crawl under it, and study the way it connects you to the rest of the world. That's what bridges are for, anyway.

There is so much to observe in places that are not conventionally beautiful. Gorgeous marble monuments and museums of meticulous oil-paintings are inspiring aesthetics, but how much of humanity do they capture? Michelangelo's David is an iconic sculpture, but studying his rock-hard abs and writing on his form falls short of capturing the average human figure. Wouldn't it be much more interesting to cultivate a narrative where one feels sympathy for an average-looking individual? The shortcomings and flaws of each person are what fleshes them out as an individual rather than a grotesque. Superman is boring, with his perfect moral standards and extraordinary abilities. The villains liven the plot with their inherent intrigue, but they too grow boring without some balance of sympathetic characteristics.

Settings are the exact same way.

Exploring spaces with flaws lead to questions that provoke thought. Places retain the fingerprints and other marks of former life that existed there. Take every opportunity to play anthropologist, and explore the stories in the dirt and mediocrity around you.



As Eddi wandered back up the hill, she caught a glimpse of an owl soaring above her head. Intrigued, Eddi followed it to a quaint college town where it landed on the steps of a library. Here, Clara the Owl offered a space of great literary encouragement.

Spine-to-Spine with the Greats

Writing is hard. How could it not be? If you're anything like me, your emotions, experiences, and opinions exist in your mind as half-formed thoughts, and transforming them into cohesive sentences feels intimidating. Perhaps more difficult still is the act of penning a new, never-heard narrative, creating characters from the void and giving them lives to live and struggles to overcome.

Writing, of course, is a beautiful exercise as well. It can make our half-formed thoughts clearer, our muddled emotions more real, and our opinions more valid. The page is a canvas for the activity of the mind, whether you're filling that page with a riveting story or a daily to-do list.

Sadly, we become so preoccupied with *how* we write that we stop caring that we are writing in the first place. This collection offers an antidote: if we care about *where* we write, perhaps those other elements of our writing will fall into place as well.

While that place will depend on what kind of person you are and what kind of place brings comfort to you, I find great comfort in libraries. As an introvert, I love their serene quietness. As a connoisseur of the English language, I love being in the presence of books stacked on desks and lined up on shelves. As a writer, I love to see the published work of all the writers who went before me, filling blank, intimidating pages of their own. Whether you identify as any of these things or not, join me to see if the library could be your writing place, too. My library of choice is King Library at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, but you can certainly replicate the experience in your local library.

It is a rainy day in early October, the kind of day that makes you want to stay in bed or light candles and read. That's not an option for college students, so the library is the next best option. King Library is a towering Georgian structure on its exterior and a relic of 1970s decorating sensibilities on the inside. It sits on the edge of Miami's campus with its back toward South Campus Avenue. Finished in 1978, the library houses The Howe Center for Writing Excellence, The Center for Information Management, and The Center for Digital Scholarship.¹

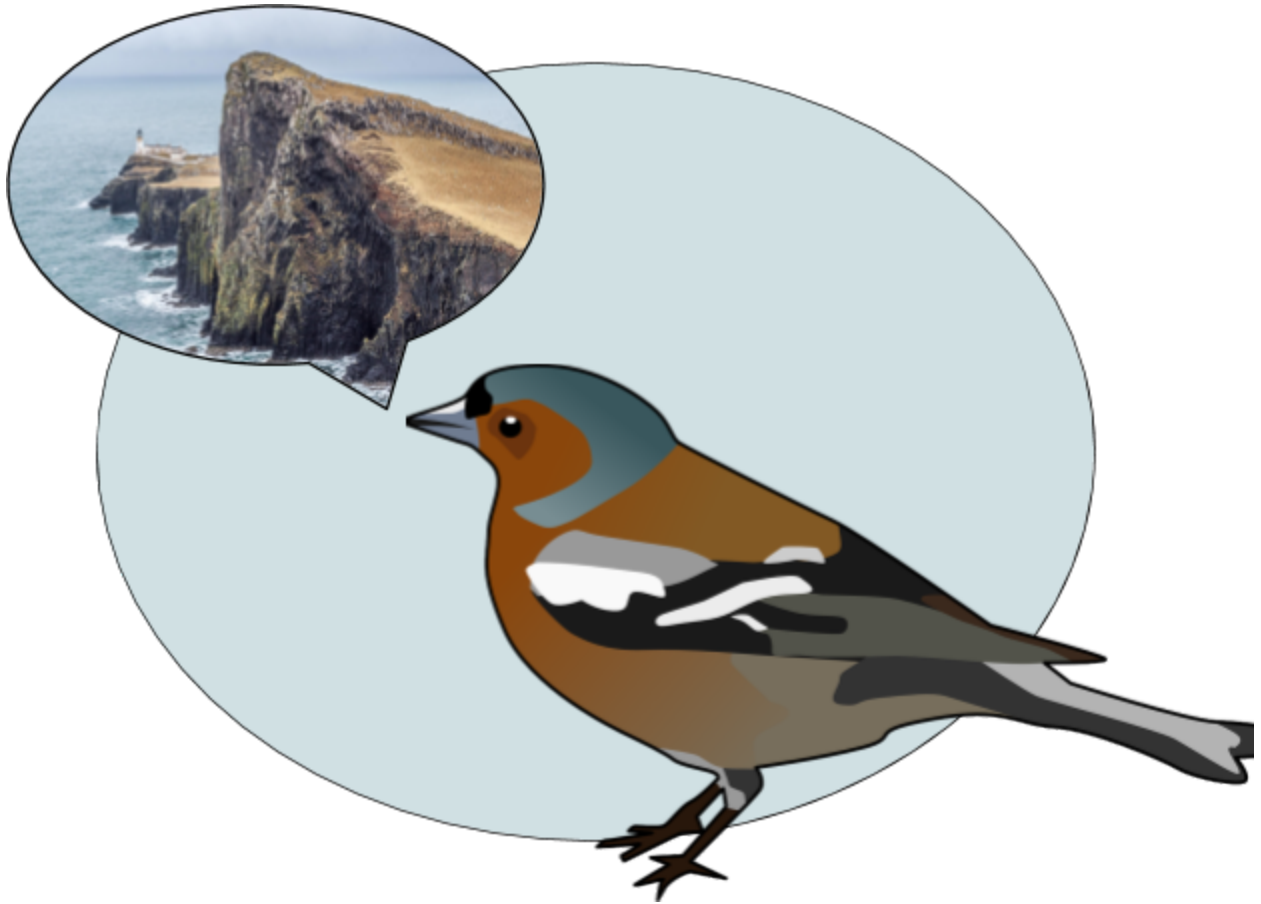
There's a cafe in the basement, which should be your first stop. I almost always accompany my essay writing with a hot cup of Earl Grey tea, which has been part of my writing ritual so many times that I now associate the smell of bergamot orange with writing. Find your own writing beverage of choice, and drink it consistently so as to train yourself as well.

Then, you will find a place to sit. The quietest sections are the best sections, and the second floor of King is supremely, deliciously quiet. Your inclination will be to sit at a desk. Don't do this. Everyone sits at the desks by windows, and you'll feel significantly more inspired if you wander into one of the aisles, preferably one that contains works by authors you admire. My personal favorite is the 19th-century British literature aisle, which, if you care to know, is PR 4750 in King Library. It contains the writings of George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Jane Austen, the Brontë sisters, and more.

This doesn't have to be *your* favorite aisle, though. Maybe you would find comfort in being near American modernist works or books on ancient Israel. I must warn you that finding a specific aisle on the second floor of King Library is no easy task, because there must be 200 aisles that look identical. Once you find what you're looking for, celebrate. You have completed the first leg of your quest.

Now it's time to settle in. Being careful that your tea (or coffee, if that's your thing) doesn't spill, take a seat. You may have to sit cross-legged, or, if you're lucky, there may be a step stool that you can perch yourself on. The librarians shouldn't mind, and there's a convenient shelf built into traditional library stools that is just perfect to rest your beverage of choice on.

Now, we write. The glorious thing about this spot is that it's always available even when the desks at the library are taken. It's also wonderful because if you are hit with writer's block, sitting spine-to-spine with works that inspire you has an osmosis-like effect. If the osmosis doesn't seem to take effect, just start reading a book near you. Perhaps the brilliance of *Hamlet* or the whimsy of *Through the Looking Glass* will be just what you need to start typing again. Inspiration is at your fingertips in your secret aisle of the library, and the discomfort of sitting without a chair will become irrelevant. You may just have to apologize as people climb over you, and offer a "you're welcome" when others see your stroke of genius and join in.



While Eddi enjoyed writing among her favorite books, she began to feel trapped by the library's four walls. Suddenly, Alex the Sparrow landed outside the window and beckoned her to explore more daring, mysterious places to write.

L'appel du Vide

L'appel du vide. Collins Dictionary defines the French phrase as a phenomenon describing the instinctive urge to jump from high places.¹ It translates to “the call of the void.” Beyond being linked to sudden suicide ideation, *l'appel du vide* is the brain’s way of coping with extreme situations by conceiving of the most concrete action possible. It happens to be linked with the high place phenomenon—and understandably so.

As a child, you sit on the lakeshore with your feet buried in the warm sand, hands curled around your Gameboy Advance. Your little sister sits next to you, spread out on a beach towel, keying at her Nintendo DS and chewing on the end of her stylus. The device looks oversized in her small hands. The ebbing water licks your toes. You have the itching compulsion to toss your video game into the lake.

L'appel du vide.

You don’t. Obviously. Why would you drop your Gameboy into the water? You hold onto the game a little bit tighter.

You are a teenager when those intrusive thoughts crowd the back of your brain again. It’s similar. You’re in line for a roller coaster. Your arm is outstretched as you snap a selfie of you and your friends, faces pressed together to all fit into the portrait frame, when it occurs to you that you could just drop it. It would slip through the grate and smash on the concrete a storey below.

L'appel du vide.

Does this feeling only ever happen when you are at risk of destroying something expensive?

Worry vibrates at the base of your skull. You rush through a dozen different scenarios of achieving total finality with your potential actions. *Concrete* actions. Shattered screens or shattered knees on the pavement below, it’s all spurred on the same way. You add the selfie to your Snapchat story.

What better way to push through writer's block than to put yourself in a situation that forces your body into action?

Even if what you write is trash, you wrote it. Work can be edited, revised, and rewritten.

So you find a place that ignites that nagging sensation at the back of your mind. Maybe you manage to break onto the balcony of Miami University’s Art and Architecture Library and sit with your laptop as close to the guard-rail as you can while still being able to focus.

Maybe you find a spectacular cliffside where you can spread out your notebook and collection of colored pens and watch the water churn on the rocky shore below, the sound of the waves and the wind like a great sleeping beast lulling your pen into a rhythm. You go to a place where you can comfortably create, somewhere that will not tease your mental stability horribly and convince you to take the leap.

But you are a writer; you are not one of the most emotionally sound bunch. Sacrifices must be made for the art of it all.

L'appel du vide.

You settle for a place with a good view.

The fenced-in balcony at the top of the Art and Architecture Library is not very high up, but knowing you're not allowed to be there adds to the thrill.

Dipping your toes into a creek running through Western campus while keying away at your laptop gets the job done too. The sun presses onto your bare shoulders; you can feel the beginnings of a sunburn bubbling up on your flesh.

Maybe you go the extra mile and set up camp at a cemetery, void in a way not many places are. Graves remind you of the final *concrete* action, an open invitation for intrusive thoughts. There's a tree with deep and twisted roots, likely older than the town itself.

You plant yourself in the dark earth and conjure your story. The sense of restlessness at the cemetery inspires you to breathe life into the thing that has so evaded you.

Here, you can sew the limbs onto your creature, your story. This place stirs anxiety in you like TV static buzzing behind your eyes. Its heart sat on your bookshelf for months, staring you down. You constructed its ribcage with your bare hands. You fed your story pages upon pages of all your favorite books, from the days when it still had baby teeth and molars embedded in its jaw, rattling around as it chewed.

Your fingers work tirelessly on your keyboard. Sometimes, you take short breaks; you get up and stretch your legs, seeking to upset the equilibrium in your brain again. You venture a little too close to the edge. You peer over.

The view from above shocks you again. You go back to writing.

This jumpstart is exactly what your story needed. Where there were blank pages and an ever-growing Pinterest mood board, there are now words clinging to the page, leaving their inky stains across screen. It was frantic and unsettled, but it was perfect.

Caution be damned. You can edit it later.

You don't let yourself delete a single word.



After taking Alex's adventurous and haunting tour of the town, Eddi decided to settle down with Neeley the Chipmunk on the front porch swing of her small house called Reunion, which Neeley swears is an author's sanctuary.

Reunion's Front Porch Swing

Back and forth, and back and forth—the porch swing, the swing that has been passed down through the years and manages to sustain life sits on the porch of Reunion. Reunion, an ugly white house on the corner of Poplar and Collins Street in Oxford, Ohio, with its purple front door and dirty walls, gets passed down through the years by the Pi Phi sorority. The house has the well-known charm of a college student's home, but the swing has its own essence of familiarity. It might not be the most ideal place to write, but it is the best place to write.

As you walk up the three front steps through the hedges guarding the house to the porch of Reunion, you get a faint whiff of trash: a lingering smell that never seems to completely dissipate when it's warm outside. The first thing you see is the fading lavender front door and the address, one-zero-one, with the missing zero and its replacement, a sloppy zero drawn on with a marker. On the front door, you notice the remnants of a splattered milkshake, hardened after months of the sun beating down on it. It is the leftover evidence of an old battle between two neighboring houses. As you scan the rest of the large, white-yellowish porch, you notice the front door isn't the only place with a disgusting pattern of milkshake. The walls, covered in substances long before our time in the house, are a good indicator of all that has occurred at Reunion.

The farther you go onto the porch, the more bugs you encounter. On a warm, sunny day, mosquitoes and wasps swarm the many benches and couches that fill the area. Looking over the railing that guards the porch, you notice worn bottle caps that look like they've been there since the turn of the twentieth century. Finally, you reach the back left corner of the porch and the best location in all of Oxford—the swing.

The rusting, gray swing with its two seats and overhead bar sits at the very farthest corner of the porch. You can see all around, but the surrounding bushes keep everyone from seeing in. It's the perfect place to watch students trek back and forth on their daily walks to and from campus and from home to Uptown. The swinging bench rocks back and forth at a comfortable pace. Fast enough so that you're moving, but slow enough that you don't really realize you're moving. With each swing, there is a faint clicking noise. There is usually a nice breeze that wraps around the house, plenty of sunshine during the day, and twinkling lights that meander around the porch poles at night. The atmosphere is calming and joyful.

Your first thought when sitting on a swinging bench on a somewhat pedestrian-filled, busy street usually wouldn't be, "I'm going to sit and write right here."

But when you do finally decide to sit down and write, you realize it is the greatest, most under-appreciated writing spot. There is always so much going on around the porch with so much inspiring material. Sitting on that swing and writing will bring you a type of joy you might not have experienced before as an author. There are always people walking by, laughing and talking to their friends. Often times, you can faintly hear someone's music in the distance. It seems like it would be distracting, but you become accustomed to and in tune with the noises around you. Nothing else matters but you and the stroke of the keys on your laptop. The girls who live in the house are often walking in and out. They stop and have a conversation with you, exchanging pleasantries. Then they go inside and, once again, you are focused back on the piece in front of you. On a beautiful day, there is nothing more peaceful. The sun shines just the right amount, giving you the best view in town.

While it seems most logical that the best place to write would be at a desk with a pencil and paper, it isn't. Whether you are struggling to write a difficult assignment for class, writing for fun, or simply jotting something down in a journal, the most inspirational, gratifying place might be the most obscure. The front porch is dirty, sticky, and somewhat smelly, yet it is one of the happiest places to sit and spend an evening. The swing is old and creaky, yet so familiar that you don't have to live there to appreciate it. There is such an overwhelming sense of all the wonderful memories that have happened in the area that they almost spill from the atmosphere into your writing. The front porch and the swing that steals the show is simply an author's sanctuary.



Looking for the same kind of peace that she found on the porch swing, Eddi drove to The University of Dayton. There, Aubrey the Dove introduced her to Serenity Pines, a spiritual garden full of life.

Serenity Pines

Hidden away by a thin wall of evergreens, the short, winding stone entrance to The University of Dayton's Serenity Pines is a quiet, reflective space perfect for writers. Located on the northeastern edge of UD's campus, Serenity Pines offers an escape to nature and solitude from the bustling city vibe of Dayton and the stress of life.

Serenity Pines was envisioned by Joseph A. Belle, a University of Dayton administrator who dreamed of a contemplative space for students. After his death in 2001, his plans for "Mother Mary's Garden" came to fruition in his honor. The names of those who died during their time at The University of Dayton, including students, staff, or faculty, are inscribed on leaves within the metalwork around the garden¹. Though mortality is apparent in these leaves and in the graveyard for religious leaders that sits on the south side of the garden, these details behave more as a respectful memorial than a somber reminder.

Although it resides on a Catholic Marianist school's campus, the garden was named Serenity Pines (rather than Belle's original "Mother Mary's Sanctuary") for the purpose of making the garden welcoming to people of all faiths. Regardless of strong—or nonexistent—religious ties, the solitude offered by this space allows the mind to explore without distraction.

I am easily distracted by others (I'm a chronic people-watcher), so being in a coffee shop or library keeps me from getting any work done. The same is true when I write in a private space, like an apartment or my room; I can turn to media and other distractions without the social pressure to get work done. Serenity Pines offers a secluded atmosphere without being completely closed off, so for writers that need the occasional reminder of humanity's existence, it's just a quick step out of the garden.

Because Serenity Pines is a garden, writers are immersed in a natural creative space. Science says that getting outside makes people happier and more creative,² which matters in a changing world where most industries, including publishing and journalism, are digitized. Thus, the potential for those in writing industries to be stuck in front of a computer or tablet is higher than ever before. Returning to nature-focused spaces like Serenity Pines can revitalize a writer's peace of mind and creativity.

The plant life within Serenity Pines directs visitors to legends, meditations, and stories of the Virgin Mother Mary's faithfulness. Even for non-Catholic writers, these stories can inspire a new way of looking at nature and its involvement in oral and

written communications. Flowers associated with Mary, including forget-me-nots, Madonna Lilies, and the Christmas Rose, provide swatches of color amidst the green and gray scene.

The fresh scent of pine emanates from the numerous species of pine trees that surround the garden. These pines are referred to as “Hands of Christ.” Our Lady’s Hair (ferns), dogwood trees (representing the Cross), Christmas Holly, Our Lady’s Mantle, and Bethlehem Sage are just some of the non-flowering plants that occupy the space. Many of these plants are evergreens, so regardless of the season, visitors still feel the life within the garden.

A bubbling fountain spills over a flattened mill stone, inscribed with the words of Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, a founder of the university: “I am like a brook that makes no effort to overcome obstacles in its way. All the obstacles can do is hold me up for a while, as a brook is held up; but during that time it grows broader and deeper and after a while it overflows the obstruction and flows along again. This is how I am going to work.”

This quotation reminds visitors that obstacles are only temporary with prayer, hard work, reflection, and perseverance. For all the writers that have experienced writer’s block or rejection, this quotation provides inspiration. If you need deeper reflection and understanding, the sculpture “The Seat of Wisdom” poses at the top of the garden’s hill for visitors to receive guidance from Our Lady.

The garden’s setting itself is open and actively welcoming. Benches sit around the grove, and open walkways allow for exploration and inspiration. Because of the secluded area that Serenity Pines encompasses, writers can close their eyes and lose themselves in nature. The sound of the fountain and waterfall mimic a running brook, and the quiet sounds of insects and small animals hint at a wooded scene. The coverage offered by ancient trees blocks biting wind in colder months and scorching sun in warmer months, making this location accessible year-round. Although southwest Ohio sometimes experiences violent winters, writing in Serenity Pines in the snow and cold is perfect for Christmas or winter wonderland settings.

For those lucky enough to reside in proximity to UD’s campus and Serenity Pines, frequent visits allow you to become acclimated to the setting and find the most comfortable way to exist in this atmosphere. By doing so, your mind will associate the space with productivity and creativity, which helps to fight writer’s block and external obstacles. For those who cannot frequent Serenity Pines, it is worth at least one trip to immerse your mind and body in a peaceful state to call upon in later writing sessions.

Forget your laptop and phone, bring a pen and paper, and let the retrospective
ambiance of Serenity Pines inspire world creation.



After spending time for herself in the historical garden, Eddi needed a dose of caffeine to energize herself for the rest of the journey. She wandered out of Serenity Pines' gates and met Savannah the Bear at a table in the upstairs corner of True West Coffee Shop.

True West: A Little Gem in Hamilton, Ohio

Hamilton, a city located within Butler County, Ohio, is building itself back up by adding a surplus of local stores, eateries, facilities, and pubs. One of the first places that came about during Hamilton's flight at the end of 2011 was True West Coffee. True West has two locations on the main strip in Hamilton, one of which is a huge attraction for Miami Hamilton students.

True West's goal is to serve Hamiltonians awesome coffee and great food while serving the community as well. Their website says, "Come by for live music on the weekends or for a mocha latte with a buddy in the morning. Let's be friends," and that is exactly what they do.¹ At least one location is open each day of the week, making coffee and friends very accessible whenever someone needs a break from reality.

The local coffee shop has won multiple awards such as the 2014 Best Place for Coffee Award and Cincy Magazine's "Best of the North"—a celebratory and competitive award between top establishments from northern Cincinnati—four years in a row (2013-2016).²

The owners of True West Coffee are Chris and Vanessa Cannon; both are graduates of Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. The couple frequented coffee shops and dreamed of opening one of their own.³ Vanessa said, "We call it 'the third place' because you have home, you have work, but this kind of a place to get away from things." Whenever the couple is in the shop, they are very friendly and kind to visitors.

The employees at True West are amiable. They all seem to get along and work well together, giving customers great service. All of the True West customers are very laid back. High school and college students go to the shop to do homework or catch up with friends. There are also people who stop in for lunch on their work breaks. You can guarantee that most patrons will leave with a smile on their faces.

True West employee Julia, a freshman at the University of Cincinnati studying art, says, "I love working at True West; it's a great place to be because my boss, Chris Cannon, really cares for everyone who works and comes in there. There's such a good energy around True West, and people notice it."

There is constantly music playing, so you can leave your headphones at home. Some songs you may hear while at True West are "Feel it Still" by Portugal. The Man, "Skinny Love" by Birdy, "Stronger Than Me" by Amy Winehouse, "Them Shoes" by Patrick Sweany, "The Boxer" by Jerry Douglas, and "Tessellate" by Alt-J. The music

adds to the carefree atmosphere encompassing the shop, and there is an open mic night from 7-10 p.m. every Friday.

The drink and food selection at True West is appetizing to say the least. The names of the sandwiches are uncommon; for example, some names include The Hippie, Loch Ness Monster, Chuck Norris, and Bada Bing. While ordering your sandwich, it's OK to laugh!

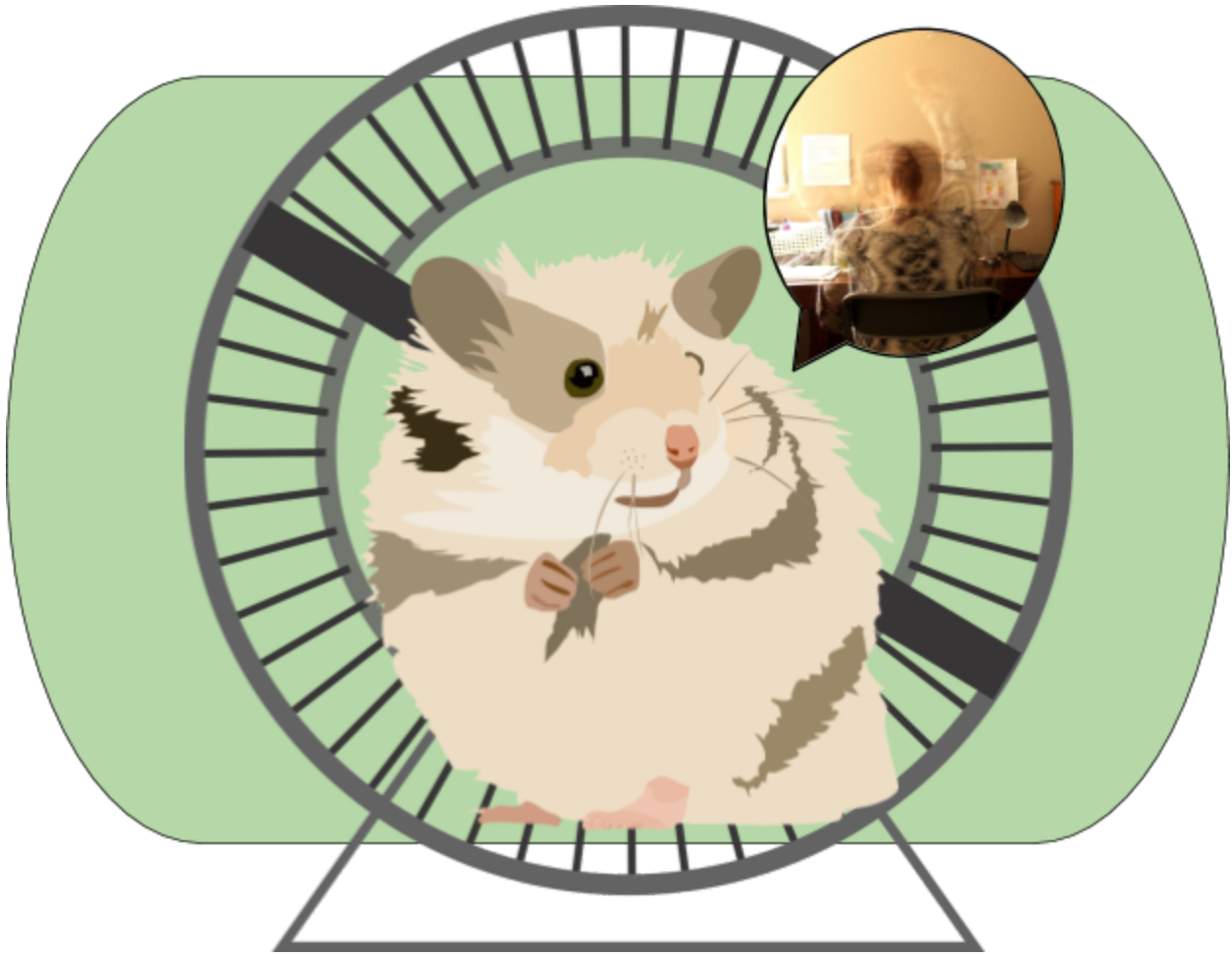
Drinks at True West mainly include hot and iced coffee, tea, hot chocolate, milkshakes, and soda. These can either warm you up or cool you down, depending on the weather. In addition, there is a drive-through at the Main Street location where customers can purchase drinks and baked goods.

The Main Street location, which is my favorite writing space, is built in an old house. There are two floors that are decorated in an old-style fashion. The main floor walls are painted yellow with paintings on them. In addition to the register and kitchen, there are big tables made for larger groups of customers and board games.

On your way upstairs, there are colorfully painted steps. The walls are solid black with beautifully painted white flowers and the Hamilton skyline, and the floorboards are blue and tattered. The upstairs has a small bathroom, a meeting room, a red and gold couch that looks like something you would find in an older woman's living room, and colorful star-shaped lanterns hanging from the ceiling. Simply put, the whole building is cozy and warm.

True West showcases artwork, including unique, colorful paintings and drawings that are wonderfully eye-catching around the Main Street shop. When eating lunch or writing, you can examine the art in order to grasp the meaning behind it. As you know, making up your own story can be fun.

The relaxed aura, soul music, kind people, and homey feeling make True West a hot spot for writing. The best place to write is upstairs in the back left table; there is a window nearby in the corner under a spotlight of natural lighting. It is an easy place to mind your own business too, which helps with concentration. The smell of coffee that disperses to the cove of this corner is sure to keep you awake while writing. Hamiltonians flee from everyday routines to True West to make for a better day. The good people, food and drink, and atmosphere make the shop stand out and shine.



Eddi was so caught up in the atmosphere of True West and her conversation with Savannah the Bear that she lost track of time. Startled after checking her watch, she quickly excused herself. Eddi had a deadline approaching and she needed to get some writing done fast. Lucky for her, she ran into Liz the Hamster who had some excellent advice on the way home.

In a Pinch

The world is caving in. Meetings are approaching. Deadlines are looming.

Obviously, it is the perfect time to pick up a pen, a keyboard and put thought to page. It always seems easiest to shove aside every other demand of the world to let the words flow from their captivity when the world is bearing down. Of course, this writing style favors the writer with a streak of procrastination, but creating meaning in the midst of chaos is a wonderful feeling.

Being in a pinch is a beautiful place to be. In one version there is pent-up energy and focus that should be directed at a specific task—cleaning a room or packing a suitcase—but is instead shifted towards creating a world away from worlds or actually starting that ten page history paper. And can it really be categorized as a waste of time when something is being crafted and put on paper?

But there's also the pinch of the deadline. You let your writing project sit for too long, and the deadline is growing so near that it's grown nostrils and is breathing down the back of your neck. There is no room to put it off now; you must face it. And in the hellish fire of the approaching due date, with sweat dripping down your creative brow, you manage to sprint through the narrow tunnel that deadlines create, with your draft or finished piece held triumphantly in your fist.

Writing in a pinch has no bounds. Any physical location will do. The middle of a lecture. The cramped seat of a plane. The comfort of your bed. And there's certainly no required attire. If you've got a big day planned and you don't want to face it; writing in your pajamas is perfectly acceptable. Or perhaps you're dressed up and minutes away from giving a presentation. Stealing those few moments to write down your thoughts while wearing a suit or heels is also welcome.

The beauty of writing in a pinch is that the only requirement is pressure—whether it be bearing down internally or externally. Perhaps you have set a personal goal and you're holding yourself to it. Or you've got an essay due at midnight that you haven't started. The only thing that counts is the pinch you're in and the way you buckle down to face it.

Perhaps writers were bred to write in a pinch. Take for instance National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo). The goal is to write a 50,000-word novel within the month of November. Not only is there the overall deadline of 50,000 words, they also break down the project to a rather imposing goal of 1,667 words per day. This isn't writing in a pinch due to procrastination; this creates a pinch simply by sheer volume.

Around 384,126 people participated in the 2016 program and more than 34,000 people reached the word goal, showing that this approach to writing is a welcomed one.¹

The overall atmosphere of the event is a frantic one. Participants range from students to working adults to retirees. Everyone has a schedule to juggle and the usual complaint is, “I just don’t have the time”. And yet those participants find the time, dedicating group forums to scheduling and best practices for sneaking in writing time throughout the thirty days of November.

“People are likely not to work on a project with a deadline in the far future because they generally discount future outcomes. Only when the deadline is close are people likely to work”.² Over the years the phenomenon of deadlines have been studied by psychologists; behavioral scientists; and in the case of Konig and Martin, mathematicians. And they found something called the “deadline rush” in which “Nearly no work is done when the deadline is far, but much work is done directly before the deadline.”²

Pushing projects off until a later date isn’t a trait possessed only by writers. Everyone does it, from putting off taxes to studying just days, or hours, before an exam. But I’ve noticed that a force of creativity is attached to my procrastination when it comes to writing, but not so much when I put off washing all the dirty dishes in the sink. In a way, not unlike the process that forms diamonds, I’ve noticed that writing under pressure creates something amazing.

Maybe not everyone likes to write in a pinch. They might sketch outlines and set specific writing goals days, or perhaps weeks, in advance of the final deadline. In my experience those writers are a rare breed. And based off my own success as a writer steeped in procrastination, I’ve found that writing in a pinch has been a wonderful place to write. It’s a place that’s always accessible no matter where you are and doesn’t judge you on what you show up wearing or what you’re writing on. I’ve found over the years that writing in a pinch is where I am my most creative and productive. It’s a dangerous precipice to teeter on when a grade or a promotion is on the line, but that precipice is also a great teeter-totter to ride.





After a busy workday, Eddi decided to go to Orchids at Palm Court, a fine dining establishment, to relax and enjoy a full course meal with Tess the fancy Feline.

Orchids at Palm Court

Nixing the flatline buzz of your laptop and tablet, you instead opt for your old-fashioned notebook and pen. Pencils are too easily erased and your electronics would ruin the atmosphere. You just want a quiet place to concentrate while you're writing. You want a place where you can be waited on hand and foot, where the only thing you need to worry about is the scratch of your pencil on paper and the topic of your writing. The staff will take care of everything else. This is a five-star establishment, not a self-serve buffet.

Stepping into the soft amber glow of reflected candles and filigree wall sconces, your shoes are cushioned by dark plum carpeting that you could disappear into. Although you want to lie down, you won't, because that would be poor etiquette. While your table is being set up, you glide over to the pristine bar. Marble and granite cool your elbows as the bartender, smartly dressed in an evening tuxedo, politely sizes you up and slides a sparkling cosmopolitan your way.

Smiling to yourself, you accept the drink, gliding your manicured nails over the detailed countertop, burgundy keratin softly clacking their way down its surface like the feet of a nocturnal songbird. You appreciate the satisfying clinks they make when they come in contact with the stem of the glass. A simple, but heartfelt and familiar staccato that signals your brain to finally take a breath for once.

A soft hand grazes your shoulder. Turning, you make your acquaintance with a waiter. He keeps his muted eyes on the ground and his silken-gloved hand across his chest as a sign of respect as he wordlessly guides you to your table. You follow the breeze of his swallowtail suit to a quiet amethyst booth in the corner of the plaza. It is soft and inviting, and smells slightly of cinnamon and cloves. As you take your seat, you give a sigh of relief as the waiter smooths every crease out of the linen tablecloth.

As the lines disappear from your presence, a cream-colored menu glides past your cheek and into the empty space in front of you. Almost as if by magic, you hear the words, "First course, please," flow out of your mouth and migrate into your waiter's expectant ears. Nodding slightly, the only remnant of his being is the suave swallowtail swish of his suit and a slight whiff of expensive cologne.

You blink, and a small English-style tea set appears out of thin air. Floral jasmine wafts around your head, creating pink clouds of wonderment. Assaulting your nose and steeping your throat with its intense bouquet, you're nearly overwhelmed by the

pureness of its flavor. The gold cup it comes in continually blinds you, and you find yourself holding it with the hand not occupied by your writing pen, as if it's too precious to let go. Finally releasing the cup after what seems like an intergalactic journey to the Isle of the Lotus Eaters, you pick up one of the miniature macarons off the dainty tea tray.

Biting into it, your teeth take a paid vacation to elsewhere. Bitter lemon and sweet almond foxtrot on your tongue as the soft but chewy texture caresses the inside of your mouth. Taking a not-too-polite swig of your tea, the remaining morsels dissolve into nothing and slide down your grateful gullet. Relishing the taste, it takes a minute before you come back to planet Earth from whatever planet you had the pleasure of visiting. Before you know it, the trays have been whisked away by gloved hands and unregistered faces, and, without remembering it, you've already written four pages of a much-needed rough draft. Call that artistic bliss, with more satisfying courses to come.

Smiling to yourself and feeling happy about your *amuse-bouche*, you anxiously await your first course. Those ever-helpful gloved hands come back to wait on you hand and foot. Awaiting your first course, a smug smile almost escapes, but you hold it back enough to continue jotting down thoughts while those lovely imps that live to serve work around you. A soft throat-clearing catches your attention, and you look up, briefly pausing from the work at hand.

"Madam, we present to you smoked salmon with english pea and pomme dauphine, dressed with horseradish and sorrel."

Your mouth waters reflexively as the scent of salmon and spicy horseradish permeate the surrounding space. As soon as you pierce the fish with your fork, it almost appears to cut itself apart, with no effort on your part at all. The bright, green english pea decides to hitch a ride on your primary bite of salmon, but you can't complain. It's just too good.

You haven't had a decent meal in weeks. Ramen noodles, dissertations, rough edits, and sour words with acid tears are all you've eaten as of late. You gave your time to others and never stored any for yourself to use. Time is the seasoning in food that gives it the flavor our stomachs crave.

Without food, the mind is nothing, and without the mind, you cannot write. Feed your mind, feed your writing, and good words will follow.



Full off delicious smoked salmon, Eddi rushed to catch her flight at the Cincinnati Airport where she met Paige the Pigeon waiting at the gate.

The Cincinnati Airport

Where can today's writer turn for a fresh idea? There must be a place a writer can go to absorb a healthy dose of unique concepts in the course of an hour or two—a place where authentic dialogue converges with characters, both rare and ordinary, in a situation injected with potential energy. Luckily for you, writer, this place of fantasies is real: the Cincinnati Airport.

From the moment you park your car at one of the many satellite lots and load into the communal shuttle, you will have free reign to observe those around you without suspicion. As the shuttle fills up, you may find yourself sitting directly adjacent to a young couple headed home to New York so that he can meet her parents for the very first time. As you sit casually, watching his leg tap nervously, you may overhear that her parents have two adorable pet pit bulls and you may see him wipe the sweat from his forehead as he discloses that he is allergic to dogs. As you enter the airport and make your way to passed that ticket counter, you may happen to see a middle-aged man checking a soft-sided bag that is roughly twice his height. As you are prompted to remove your shoes at security, you may encounter an eighty five year-old woman loudly expressing her displeasure as an equally displeased TSA agent pats her down. On your way to the gate, there's a chance that you may encounter a middle school gymnastics team that seems to be supervised by one rather unfortunate mother, who glances longingly at the bar while she attempts to herd the group onto the train. Even if you don't, chances are you will have picked up enough interesting tidbits along the way to leave you feeling adequately inspired by the time you take your laptop out at the gate. Under the perfectly legitimate guise of an innocent traveler, there will be no limit to the amount of inspiration you draw.

By now you may be wondering what the Cincinnati Airport has to offer as a writing location that other airports don't. Couldn't I just as well visit any ol' airport of my choosing next time I'm looking for a first-rate writing location? No, writer, and here's why: "The Cincinnati airport has about every amenity an air traveler could desire."¹ The airport is carefully laid out to promote efficient flow from parking lot to gate. This means less time struggling through security and more time sitting at a coffee shop, restaurant, or gate of your choosing, translating all that inspiration into the written word. In 2016, The Cincinnati Airport was ranked the second best overall regional airport in North America and the 32nd best airport in the world by SkyTrax, a

third party rating agency that determines rankings based on 13.2 million passenger surveys.² Now, savvy writer, you may be wondering why you would choose the second best airport as your writing destination rather than the first. It's simple my friend—you should choose the airport that's closest to you, if not physically, than emotionally.

Inspiration is the key ingredient in the recipe for a successful writing session, but that doesn't mean it is the only ingredient. After all, who can write on an empty stomach? The perfect writing location must include means of obtaining nourishment, and the Cincinnati Airport has it in spades. This airport has sixteen unique choices for passengers when it comes to food, including two Sam Adams Pub locations; four Starbucks locations; and a local favorite, Graeter's Ice Cream.³ Alcohol, caffeine, sugar, or any combination of the three may be just what your writing needs. At the Cincinnati Airport, your fuel is just a moving walkway away.

Next time you find yourself preparing to embark on a big writing project, consider a journey to the Cincinnati Airport. There is nothing like a TSA pat down, close proximity to total strangers, and the excitement of travel to inspire your next piece. So grab a laptop, a tablet, or even a napkin and a crayon, and get ready to curl up in one of those comfy chairs at the gate. Friendly staff members, great food options, and plenty of real-life characters will be there to get you going. When you get back from your next trip, you'll bring home more than photos—you'll bring home that shiny new story you've been dreaming of writing.



Eddi took Paige the Pigeon's advice and watched passerbys at the airport until she decided that she wanted to explore a new culture and country. She booked the next flight across seas: Ireland. Her first stop in this unfamiliar territory was St. Stephen's Green, where she met Emily the Sheep.

The Emerald Isle

Dia dhuit, writer. That means “hello” in Gaelic. I’m going to take you to the land of Guinness, leprechauns, and shamrocks—but not in the typical sense. Most travelers think you go to Dublin for the drinking culture because Ireland, also known as The Emerald Isle, is known for their Guinness and Jameson. But there is a small park on the south side that, although popular, is not a typical tourist destination. You run into it while out on your morning coffee run or while you are trying to get to Grafton Street, a shopping district of the city. Let me introduce you to St. Stephen’s Green.

Walk along the River Liffey, you’ll see street performers singing and playing guitars in the background. Cars are buzzing all around you, because after all, Dublin is a city and the capital of Ireland. Cross the bridge from the north to the south and keep walking. You’ll pass the Temple Bar district, home to many famous pubs, and continue down Grafton Street where more street performers entertain, carts sell baked goods, and storefronts gleam with souvenirs and clothes. As you near the end of Grafton and look across the way, a large archway leads to plush green grass.

Walking through the archway takes you into a different dimension of Dublin. Suddenly all the noise stops. City traffic and construction sounds fade out. It is silent other than small groups of people chatting and the sounds of birds chirping.

The park is covered in a variety of trees and ponds. Swans swim while children try to feed them. Couples stroll hand-in-hand in sweet serenity. An older couple reads the historical signs that are placed throughout the park. Before being a local park, St. Stephen’s Green used to be a marshy common on the edge of Dublin. It wasn’t until 1664 that a wall was built around the marsh and the land around it was sold for much-needed revenue.¹ Still today, Georgian style homes can be seen lining the walls of the park. The land inside the wall was reconstructed to be a resort getaway for the busy city life.

During the Easter Rising of 1916, more than 200 members of the Irish Citizen Army made the area their home base and position.¹ The park, although proven to be a weak position for the army, now serves as a historical landmark to the Bloody Sunday battle. Bullet holes from the battle can still be seen in the walls surrounding the park, though St. Stephens Green’s quiet nature allows for more peaceful thoughts today.

There’s a bench near the first pond. It sits on a bridge, overlooking the water. Sit down on the bench and gaze over the scene. Take a deep breath, listen to the sounds

around you, and watch the swans swim from the gazebo across the water towards the bridge. We've arrived at my favorite writing space.

Some people say that you can't think before you write; I believe the opposite. Perhaps getting creative juices flowing is exactly what you need as a writer. Maybe you can't just write. Maybe you need inspiration. Daydream about the dinner you will be having at the Brazen Head, the oldest pub in Ireland. Or listen in on conversations happening around you: are they speaking the same language as you? Where do you think they are from? Make up a backstory about the man sitting across the pond feeding the swans.

As you look around the pond in St. Stephen's Green, tune out the noise around you and focus on your thoughts. If there is an idea playing around in your head, pick up your pencil.

Writers write in many different ways. Some type or scribble it all out in one sitting, ignore their piece for a few days, and then revisit to edit mistakes or add new ideas. Other writers are meticulous and take their time. There is no wrong way to write.

As you sit by the fountain full of swans, ignore them. Ignore the people around you, and focus on your thoughts and your paper. You are the only one in the park as your hand begins to scribe on the white page that lies in front of you.

If you prefer a laptop, try to change it up. St. Stephens Green is a tranquil place without much technology, so you may find better luck with a pen and paper than you would with a clunky laptop straddled across your lap.

Away from the pond sits a fountain in an open area with less trees. There are many walkways, and now you can see a street view—but the noise of traffic and construction is still muffled.

Take notice of the colors inside of St. Stephen's Green—everything is brighter, lighter, and peaceful.

There are benches all around the southern side of the park, so pick one and begin the thinking and writing process over again.

St. Stephen's Green, The Emerald Isle's hidden gem is my favorite place to write; although it is a small park on the southside of Dublin. Despite the city streets and the traffic and shopping happening outside of the gates, the noise from the chaos is somehow blocked and makes St. Stephen's Green the perfect writing space. It is unfamiliar and foreign but comforting and homey. Thank you for exploring my favorite place with me, *slán*.



After visiting such a lovely park in Dublin, Eddi wanted to make the most of her trip and wondered what other inspirational scenery Europe had to offer. She made her way to Paris in search of such a place when she happened upon Haley the Poodle who introduced her to the banks of the scenic River Seine.

The Scene on the Seine

It's just like you imagined it. The sun gently hugs your back as you sit on the worn concrete bank. Two women sit next to you (one in a beret, nonetheless), tossing French quips back and forth, a conversation you can't understand due to the ever-stubborn language barrier, but you easily pick up the universally-known warm and friendly tone exchanged between friends. Lovers are scattered in pairs here and there, holding hands or crying or kissing or perhaps all three. Across from you, a man with gray scruff reads his book and insouciantly sips an Aperol spritz. To your left, a street performer dances; to your right there's a quaint used-book stand. And as wonderfully cliché as it is, French music plays softly in the background from a brass trio positioned just down the boardwalk. You've got a pen and a crumpled envelope in your hand, and you're sitting along the River Seine in Paris. You're here, and you're inspired to write in the most perfect place the universe has ever presented to you.

Can you smell the croissants and hear the trumpets already? You could spend a lifetime of afternoons perched along this romantic body of water, fearless of writer's block.

The Seine flows through ten of the total twenty *arrondissements* (neighborhoods) in Paris, giving you a heaping handful of locations for water-side writing.

Part of the River Seine flows through the backyard of the legendary Musée d'Orsay. If you're only in the city for a short time, I recommend ogling the museum's treasures and afterwards, picking a bench along the water in Les Berges de Seine, just a short walk down from the museum. Les Berges de Seine, a one-and-a-half-mile section of the Seine's riverbank, is a free, fun-filled area for both kids and adults. You can get the creative juices flowing by watching or participating in anything from outdoor ping-pong to chess to yoga. The air buzzes with life which is sure to translate onto the page.

Want something quieter? Venture farther down near the Pont de la Concorde for a serene spot to scrawl out your thoughts and stories.

Want to write in a spot worthy of symbolism? Find a perch on any of the thirty-two bridges on the river. The *cri de coeur* of the Seine is the Pont Neuf, the oldest and most romantic bridge on the river (hello, best-selling romance novel!). This iconic bridge has been immortalized in works of art, spanning from poems to films. The

bridges offer spectacular views that will make you stop and think *oh my god, I'm actually writing in Paris*—and the prose is sure to pour out of you.

Want to feel truly enraptured by the Seine's allure? The river is host to 117 culturally rich islands which form an extensively enticing archipelago, each isle offering its own unique and storied vibe.

The two most prominent islands are the Île de la Cité and the smaller Île Saint-Louis. Both are located in the center of the city where Paris was born, and both are bustling with activity—not necessarily a deserted-island feel, but exceptional for thought provocation or character inspiration. If you're missing home in the United States, unearth a spot to compose on the Île aux Cygnes, home of the mini Statue of Liberty.

Slightly off the Seine, there are incredible cafés, bistros, and shops scattered throughout the city that are fantastic for finding picnic supplies to complement your writing or discovering new ideas during a writing break. Visit the legendary Shakespeare & Company —the replica of the original where literary legends like Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Stein used to rendezvous—to feel like your favorite authors. Cross the Seine on the Pont Notre-Dame to take a break at one of the oldest coffee shops in Paris, Café de Flore.

When I left the Musée d'Orsay on a Sunday afternoon last spring, I didn't plan on writing, nor did I hunt out my spot on the Seine near Les Berges. Sitting down on an old wooden bench, I observed my surroundings, and the urge to write overwhelmed me; the hopeless romantic inside of me screamed to document my emotions. I found an old ink pen and a crumpled envelope, and I began writing in the most perfect place I ever have written.

Whether you want to uncover a writing escape in the quiet, grassy riverside; yearn to find inspiration in a bustling café overlooking the river; or prefer to surround yourself with the written word in the company of strangers at any spot on this inspiring body of water, I cannot recommend writing on the Seine highly enough. *C'est si bon.*



When it was time to bid Haley the Poodle adieu, Eddi wasn't quite sure where to go next. She had enjoyed her time in the city, but she felt like she needed a break—a change of pace. Perhaps immersion in a more relaxed lifestyle was what she really needed to get the ink flowing. Hannah the Turtle knew just the place.

La Campagna

Like fine wine and rich chocolate, great writing is a delicacy. It takes the best ingredients and a fine facility to produce a sensational product. This facility is key to production. It provides the craftsman with the ingredients of inspiration and relaxation needed to make something truly delectable. It must allow the craftsman much gain, but ask nothing in return. This place—as I have found it—cannot be contained by four walls. It must allow one’s mind to roam free over vast scenery. Texture must be visible in a rugged terrain, and beauty must challenge the ruggedness. A sea of blue adds a calming sense, and a slight, warm breeze is ideal for maximum comfort. I have found one place on Earth that meets this criteria. This place gives to the conscious and subconscious a freedom never before experienced. It provides the essential ingredients for fine writing. This place resides in the mountainsides of Sicily, Italy. It is a place where farmers nurture their crops and families escape cramped cities. It is where the mountains meet the sea and where poppies grow alongside cacti and grapevines. This place is the setting of great love stories and horrible deaths, but no movie has ever truly captured the good it does for the soul. This is where opposites meet and intertwine to produce magnificent beauty. This place is called *la campagna*.

The Sicilian countryside, what is referred to as *la campagna*, is an oasis for many accustomed to cramped, city living. The direct translation of this phrase to English is “the country,” but this hardly does the scenery justice. In Sicily, the country is an escape. This peaceful land is spotted with agriculture consisting mostly of olive trees, vineyards, fruit trees, and almond trees, each plot backing up to its own villa. Villas vary in size and structure, some just four stone walls and a porch, others boasting beautiful wrought-iron balconies and excessive size. Whatever the house, a porch is a must. It is the sitting area of the house, the place where the breeze hits just right and the blazing desert sun cannot reach. This is the place of calmness, relaxation, and rejuvenation.

Alongside the agriculture grow cacti and tufts of wild brush. The most common cactus plant of the area is called the *ficodindia*, which translates to “prickly pear.” These cacti produce small fruit that are hard and piney on the outside with a tender, sweet interior. During my first visit to Sicily, my cousin gave me the nickname *ficodindia*, comparing of the description of the fruit to my personality. The most Sicilian experience I have had was snacking on this delicious fruit on the porch of my family’s villa overlooking their land from which it was picked.

Looking out from the porch of a villa, one can't help but notice the rugged terrain. Vast mountain ranges cover most of the island, topped with the occasional castle built into the rock. Along with wild brush, cacti, and farms, a beautiful weed grows rampant across the dry land in the early summer: fields of bright red poppies can be seen covering hillsides and growing out of cracks in old concrete. The beauty of these flowers seems to soften the landscape, making the scarcely lush mountains with their jagged rock formations a little more appealing. Without the poppies, the land would lack color and vibrancy and the attraction so many feel to Italian scenery.

Behind the mountains—if just the right mountain is picked—the deep blues of the sea can be seen. Sicily is surrounded by the Tyrrhenian Sea, Messina Strait, Ionian Sea, and the Mediterranean Sea.¹ Each sparkles in a way only salt water can. The view of the sea is liberating; it sets the mind free with its vast blueness. The contrast of the calm seas against the mountains captures the mind's eye and, at the same time, sets it free. This is why *la campagna* is a favored place by Sicilians. Their lives are plagued by unemployment, economic struggles, intense desert heat, and noisy, crowded towns. The buildings of the towns are old and deteriorating, and the streets are always alive with car horns and the loud banter of neighbors—there is no chance for peace to rejuvenate the mind and body. Yet, in *la campagna* all of this is possible. With such a view, the mind can finally focus and find inspiration.

Sicilian beauty is at the heart of many works of literature and film. This land and culture allure the heart and inspire the soul. As I sit looking out over the terrain and sea from the modest porch of my family's villa, I am overcome with emotion and passion for this place. My mind is allowed to wander here, to mix the soft blue ocean, jagged mountains, and bright red poppies into something entirely my own. If I were a painter, I would paint such a scene over and over, but since I am a writer, I will use this perfect writing space in the comfort of the shade and breeze to make my writing a delicacy.



Back in Ohio and feeling nostalgic for the foods from her travels around the world, Eddi met Chase the Crow, who showed her to the North Market—a place full of inspiration for the palette and the pen.

The North Market, Columbus, Ohio

The best way to ensure good writing—or at least the perfect conditions for good writing—is through good food. The flavors and aromas of different cuisines stimulate something in the mind that exudes creativity and inspiration. The North Market in Columbus, Ohio has existed since 1876.¹ With over thirty merchants and a gaggle of farmers, there's no shortage of that bustling market feeling. Originally established next to the city's public cemetery, the market had a few setbacks including burning down and almost being shut down permanently. The market has now stood in the same place since late 1995.¹

From Flavors of India's saag paneer to Little Eater's "seasonal vegetable-based cuisine"² (you have to try the buttermilk cheddar biscuits) you can find something to satisfy that craving you've been having all week. Open seven days a week, you'll have no trouble finding the ideal time to go. I like to go on a Saturday, when everyone is out in the city strolling around. When Autumn rolls around and everyone is in the mood to wander about in the crisp morning air, I feel so inspired watching everything happen around me. The North Market is a perfect place to grab something from a merchant, sit at a table, and get some work done. I find that going to the market at certain times inspires and elicits different writing styles. Just when I think an idea of mine is lost, a trip to the North Market always rejuvenates my writing.

For writing poetry, start the day by getting out of the house; 9 a.m. until 11 a.m. is the market's slower period, so it's the perfect time to grab a seat and crank out some early morning poetry. Need some inspiration? Stauf's Coffee Roasters serves fresh, locally roasted coffee. Keep it simple, and order a latte. Don't particularly like coffee? They also have a wide range of loose-leaf tea that'll transport you all over the world.

Or, check out the bouquets Market Blooms has to offer if you're feeling extra passionate. Maybe the smell of fresh flowers will elicit a couple of good lines for that poem you're writing.

Take a seat the bar of Stauf's Coffee Roasters or (if the fresh market is outside) on the concrete ledge outside. It's a perfect place to sit undetected while still being able to people-watch and feel the energy of the morning market-goers.

Noon to 3 p.m. is the perfect time to go when you're needing inspiration for your novel because this is the market's busiest time of the day. Still in the research stage of your story? Let Flavors of India take you to Punjab with their authentic cuisine. Need a

symbolic object to weave into your storyline? Check out Better Earth for handmade jewelry and other trinkets.

Sit upstairs at a table along the railing, overlooking the balcony. This is the perfect place to people-watch because you have a full aerial view of the market floor and the market-goers. Watch how people weave in and out of other shoppers and try new food. Your novel's characters are practically writing themselves.

For analyzing rhetoric, go in late afternoon. The market is still busy, but not so much that you won't be able to hear yourself think while you decipher a piece of rhetoric. Grab a late lunch or early dinner and sit down ready to be focused (and fed).

If the weather's nice, sit outside at the picnic tables. You'll have plenty of space to work with, and the fresh air combined with all the wonderful smells of the market drifting through the door will be calming and will help your mind focus. If the weather isn't great, a table by the window on the upstairs balcony will suffice.

Morning time is best for editing work. You'll want your head clear and focused in order to make the best edits possible. Pistacia Vera offers artisanal, French-inspired baking right in Columbus. What more could you want? Try a morning croissant with a cup o' joe from Stauf's.

Sit somewhere secluded where you think you can best focus. I prefer to sit at the bar at Stauf's. It's enough in the open that I feel connected to the morning market-goers around me, but I'm able to stay focused on my work. The bar can serve as your own little workstation.

Whether it's early-morning poetry, lunchtime novel writing, or late-afternoon rhetoric, the North Market has everything to offer that a writer would need on a day out of the office. The bustling market atmosphere will electrify and inspire; the coffee shop offers the chill atmosphere you've been looking for; the outdoor seating will give you a breath of fresh air. The market holds inspiration just waiting to be skimmed off the top for your latest piece of writing. If you can't seem to get the words on the page, any of these spots are great to do some reading, too. There's no better way to inspire your own writing than by reading one of your favorite books.



After a bustling day at the North Market, Eddi needed time to relax. She made her way up to Michigan, where she met Claire the Otter on the picturesque piers of Fishtown and the beaches of The Sleeping Bear Dunes.

Leland, Michigan

If you're looking for a place to settle in with a notepad and paper, far from stuffy library walls or bustling coffee shops, the outdoors is a breath of fresh air. A bench is an unassuming option, yet it offers the variance many writers need—but you must choose your bench carefully. Its sun-bleached wood should peel with every passing Indian summer, attaining a color and texture worn soft from wayward grains of sand and the scuffs of resting travelers. Look for one timidly tucked on the side of the boardwalk, above the fray of fisherman and backpackers on their way to an untouched land. It is here you should write, among the quieted commotion of people going to and fro, your pad of paper warmed by the mild sun. This bench is ideal for inspiration; conjuring up the soft breeze, the murmur of the nearby falls, and the endless blue horizon that bleeds into the lake, interrupted only by the far-off islands and the sailboats returning to harbor. Thankfully, this exact bench exists. Preserved and protected simply by the locals' love, the bench resides in Fishtown, a hidden historical fishing village located in Leland, Michigan.¹

No drive to a coffee shop can match the drive to Fishtown, making any detours well worth your while. Northern Michigan, the north western “pink tip,” is a unique area that remains undiscovered by tourism. Driving the famous M22 highway along Michigan's thousands of lakes offers amazing views at every turn, but the true highlights are Fishtown and the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. Fishtown is located about fifteen minutes past the Sleeping Bear Dunes on along M22. Deep brainstorming can be accomplished on this winding drive, a perfect precursor for Fishtown.²

Wander down between the fishing shanties until you've reached the boardwalk along the river. This is where you'll find your bench. The sun has more than likely warmed the wood for you, so take a seat and settle in. A spiral notebook and ink pen or a trusted laptop will do the trick for any type of writing you have in mind. I recommend taking a glance up every once and awhile and embracing your environment. You can use the steady water beneath you, the silent grace of sailboats coming and going, and the dune grass bending beneath the light breeze in your writing, whether it's poetry or scientific research. Embrace it all, and write to your heart's content.

All writers need a break from time to time. Luckily, surrounded by the quaint local shops and breathtaking Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, there are endless distractions. The Dam Candy store is one of the cutest stops within the retired fishing

shanties. Displaying the local humor with this play on words (dam versus damn), this shop contains some of the most inexpensive and delicious treats in town. It offers the perfect refuge if you're ever in need of some sugary inspiration. Enjoy chatting with some of the friendly locals; they will gladly offer a plethora of stories about the old town. Walk the docks towards Lake Michigan and watch tanned fisherman unload their boats from the day's catch or eager backpackers board the Manitou Passage Ferry towards the two iconic islands located ten miles from shore. While you explore, you're almost guaranteed to see large fish swimming underneath the boardwalk and, on a lucky day, a playful otter bobbing between the docked boats.

One of best head-clearing walks (if the immediate scenery isn't doing the trick) takes you around to the other side of the river and onto Van's beach. The entrance to the beach is marked by Van's, a retro repair shop and lush foliage that spits you out on a wide expanse of Lake Michigan beach. Van's offers a breathtaking panorama of the famous towering sand dunes, the pristine water, and the quaint Leland harbor tucked to the right side. Bring your pad of paper with you to the shore and jot down new ideas that come to you while you wade in the waves.

When you've finally closed your notebook or shut your laptop with satisfaction, take a moment to enjoy the bliss. Wander down to the harbor and take one last adventure out onto the pier, or simply reflect on the walk back to your car. Watch a famous Northern Michigan sunset among the locals on Van's beach or in your rearview mirror as you return back to the reality of a different lifestyle. Either way, your writing will reflect the peace and history you felt here.



Feeling relaxed after her day with Claire the Otter, Eddi decided to venture to the Eastern Coast. In Providence, Rhode Island, she met Grace the Seal who took her to see creativity and art in a civic setting.

Providence: The Small Big City

Providence, Rhode Island is a “small big city”—as I like to call it. I quickly fell in love with the culture, beauty, and quaintness of the charming capital. Spend time here, and you’ll start to notice the authenticity and history fuels this big city in the smallest state, allowing for a visitor to find comfort and peacefulness in the buzz. The variety of neighborhoods, people, and culture allow your mind to wander as you look for inspiration to write. Each nook and cranny of the small big city provides a unique perspective, and for a writer, a perfect spot to write.

Providence is home to RISD (Rhode Island School of Design, one of the most prestigious art and design schools in the entire country). While English isn’t an option for a major, a writer or poet will find no problem finding inspiration for their works. Upon entering the city, you will start to notice pop-up art or passionate displays of creativity, such as a subtle (yet classy) work of graffiti. Even in the summers, when the students are gone, their creative minds linger—allowing for a local or visiting writer to bask in the glory of their hard work. The city officials have allowed much of the art to remain, as they realize the value it has and the tourists it brings. Around the city there are countless murals, statues, and street-art displays, which can be credited to the up-and-coming artists of RISD. For a creative mind, the street art created by RISD students is inspiring to look at up close or from a distance while sitting inside a coffee shop.

In addition to RISD, Providence is also home to Brown University, an Ivy League college. The intellectual advances that take place just up the hill at Brown cannot be ignored, and the history of the campus and the innovation of its alumni ring throughout the city. While strolling through the campus or sitting on one of its many grassy quads, the inner intellectual spirit might emerge into whatever piece you might be working on.

These two centers for education help to fuel the brain in several different ways. Challenge your beliefs about what art is or what art should be at RISD or take a short walk and learn about all the incredible educators and students that call Brown home. For a small city, Providence packs an educational punch.

Rhode Island’s citizens are among some of the proudest in the country. Every Saturday during the summer, hundreds of people come out to support a Providence tradition: Waterfire. Decades ago, students at Brown had an inspired idea to light the river on fire—yes, on fire. Since the 70s, over fifty basins have been installed to hold

bonfires. People line the side of the river to watch the water come to life. Every week, a new artist picks the music and lighting for the event, making each experience unique.

In the many artisan shops, you'll see several products marked "Rhode Island Made." Rhode Islanders welcome tourists with open arms, offering food tours, architecture tours, and river tours—all at an affordable price. The restaurants have fresh and authentic food without the wait you might find in a bigger city, so you can experience drinks, dinner, and a to-die-for dessert all in one night.

Though Providence is in a bay, signs of the Atlantic are visible throughout the city. A river runs through the entire city with dozens of public spots to enjoy its beauty on the riverfront. Additionally, ferries leave every hour on a nice day to Rhode Island's gem of a city—Newport. As seasons change, the summer breeze turns into a cold, brisk wind as the beaches are white with snow. The dramatic change in scenery from season to season is quite different than you might find in another region—yet people are loyal to the beaches of the Ocean State. These passionate people might inspire a writer to create the perfect characters.

I'm sure everyone thinks their city is unique, but Providence is a conglomeration of personalities—and that's what makes it so special. One day you can tap into educational opportunity and the next you can explore your creative side. With a little bit of everything, Providence shows no judgment to your abilities or skills. The passion around the city allows for a flow of new ideas and the cultivation of old ones. Turn any corner, settle down in a green space, dip your toes in the river, or venture through the streets—you are bound to find inspiration.



Eddi ended her journey by talking with Mason the Moose. He told her a gripping tale about some time he spent in Alaska, and how he realized there that writing is more than just finding the right spot—it's about living the story.

Denali National Park

I travelled to Alaska in the summer of 2014 to vacation and to attend my cousin's wedding. He lives near Fairbanks, so it wasn't a destination wedding, and honestly I would only see Alaska as a location for something like that in the summer when the sun skips off the horizon, but never really goes away. Who can complain with sixty to seventy degrees and twenty-hour days? I arrived in time for the last spurts of a large wildfire somewhere beyond Fairbanks, making the first few days as hazy and smoky as standing downwind from a campfire.

The taste of smoke took several days to leave my palette while exploring the flat riverlands where Fairbanks is located. The things I experienced there were only the warm up to what I would see in Talkeetna, a small town just outside the borders of Denali National Park.

Part of my own experience in Alaska was searching for inspiration for the sci-fi novel I have spent years working on. It's a large toll on the imagination to envision new planets with exotic locations and to find a way to place my characters within those spaces. I thought that Alaska would be the perfect place to experiment setting my protagonists within the grandiose frontier environments. For the two weeks that I was there, my characters accompanied me everywhere, and slowly I came to understand them a little better. It helped that I met a variety of strange people living to the best of their ability in the Alaskan frontier.

One day, I decided to explore Denali National Park. On top of a hill looking out over the rolling valleys that snake upwards to the glaciers slowly grinding their way through the Alaskan Range, there was a man sitting with his legs swinging over the edge of a large boulder. I climbed to the top of the rock and stood behind him for a moment. I had climbed up the hill from the direction I was facing with my eyes at the top the entire time, yet only now he appeared before me.

"To think that the entirety of this place is bisected by one ninety-two-mile road," the man said without turning. "Have you been on the tour?"

"I haven't."

I find it odd that I replied so calmly and without hesitation. Even though I was standing behind a complete stranger, I felt completely at ease with this man. I could tell even as he sat there that he was tall like me. His short, thick, gray hair suggested that he was middle-aged, but his physique betrayed that. I must have been entranced by the

view since I didn't immediately notice him turn and look at me. His soft blue eyes and thick gray beard hid his strong facial features, but I immediately thought that this person was the most jacked grandpa I had ever seen in my life.

"Come sit."

I sat beside him as he returned his gaze to the valley that extended before us. It was impressive and monstrous to think that the slice of the lands we could see beyond the confinements of the valley were infinitesimal to the whole of Alaska. The mountains beyond gave no perspective to the scope of the hundreds of miles of land in all directions. "Who are you?" I ask absentmindedly. There's a connection between this familiar man and this place.

"If you think about it, I'm sure my name will come to the tip of your tongue."

"Maximus..." I say as an eagle follows a downdraft to the river, where it then scans for fish at a low altitude.

"That's me."

"You look different than normal." This man is my creation. He is the main character in my novel. I've never imagined him to be so cheerful, but as he appears before me in this place, he looks content with where he is.

He turns and looks at me and says, "Haven't you figured it out yet?"

I don't know what he's referring to. "No?"

"In this place you can clearly see me, can't you? Doesn't that say something about what you've been looking for in my character?"

"I'm not sure. I've imagined you and the others over and over again, but I still can't envision you the way I want."

"Don't force yourself. You're writing me right now. Changing me slowly into the person you envision. So sit back and enjoy the view."

In a whirlwind of inspiration, Eddi went back to where her journey started: her childhood home. She laid out her notes from the animal authors she had met along the way; they covered the floor in a blanket of print. She sat in the middle of the spread with her pencil and notebook, ready to begin her story—a book not written by herself, but compiled from the voices of all of her writing mentors. Perhaps Eddi didn't want to write at all—maybe what she really wanted to do was to help other authors bring their tales to life in the minds of readers all over the world. Eddi wasn't an author, she was an editor. So she exchanged her pencil for a red pen and got to work.

The pages of her notes started to fly in a cloud above her head as she compiled the stories into a single narrative: first the beach, then the woods, then the university campus, the coffee shop, the airport, the island, the river, the mountains, and everywhere in between.

After weeks of work, Eddi finally put her pen to rest and closed the cover of the final copy. She smiled at the story that wasn't hers, but all of theirs. Eddi had one wish for her readers: that they would find the perfect place to write—that they would Come Write Here.

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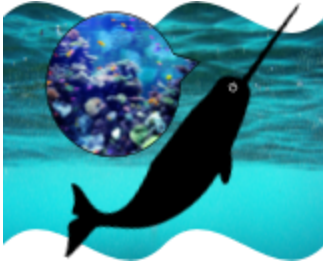
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Author Biographies



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Allie Springer is a junior at Miami University double majoring in Professional Writing and Media and Culture. She is from Columbus, Ohio. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her friends, exploring new places, and drinking coffee.



Olivia Bauer is a junior Professional Writing major with an Environmental Science co-major. She is from Frankfort, Illinois and was a gymnast for over 14 years. She loves spending time outdoors, riding her bike, and enjoying science-fiction books. She hopes to pursue a career that will allow her to combine her two passions of writing and protecting the environment.



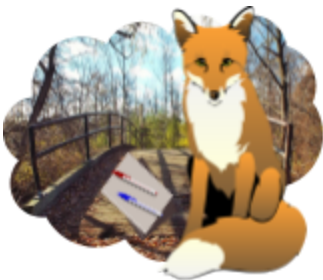
Jessi Wright is a junior with an English Literature and Professional Writing double major and a Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies minor from Miami University. She's originally from a small town in Southern Ohio, Wheelersburg. She hopes to escape country life one day and become a publisher of books and/or professor. In her free time, Jessi likes to read, hike, and play with her many animals.



Stephen Valentine is a Professional Writing major and a General Business minor at Miami University. He is from St. Louis, Missouri where he is the youngest of six. Stephen loves spending time at his farm, Heart 6 Ranch, with his family.



Maddy Hunter is a junior at Miami University double majoring in Professional Writing and Political Science. She is from Springfield, Virginia, a small suburb outside D.C. She would like to work for a couple years and eventually apply to law school. In her free time she likes to spend time with her dog Frazier, eat lots of food, and take naps.



MaKayla Reichert is a junior English Professional Writing major and Integrated Media Studies minor at Miami University. She is a passionate native of Cincinnati. In her free time, she collects vintage leather-bound books and rereads the works of her favorite author, Oscar Wilde.



Clara Milligan is a graduating English Literature major from Lebanon, Ohio. Following graduation, she hopes to find a job somewhere doing something—hopefully to do with words, stories, and brands. In her free time, she longingly looks at pictures of the English countryside and spontaneously auditions to be in productions of *Pride and Prejudice*.



Alex Grana is a junior at Miami University, majoring in Professional Writing and double minoring in Fashion and Design and Political Science. She is from Sylvania, Ohio. Alex plans on attending New York Fashion Week this winter, and hopefully interning there with her current employer before heading to law school after graduation.



Neely Coffey is a junior at Miami University majoring in Professional Writing with a double minor in Business Management and Leadership and Sustainability. She was born and raised in Chicago, Il. She has a tattoo of a cup of coffee on her ankle for her last name.



Aubrey Klosterman is a senior at Miami University with an Individualized Studies major within the disciplines of English Literature and History. She also has a minor in Creative Writing. She is from the small German village of Minster, Ohio. When she can find free time, she likes to paint, sing, and read/watch historical and fantastical dramas.



Savannah Lang is a junior Professional Writing and Strategic Communication major at Miami University. She is from Hamilton, Ohio and desires to work in human resources or a marketing department. In her free time, she listens to music, reads, and watches The Office.



Liz Winhover is a junior Professional Writing major with a minor in Information Systems and Analytics. She's originally from Delphos, Ohio and hopes to pursue a master's in Library Sciences and in the future work as a librarian at a public library. When not at school, she enjoys reading bad YA novels and hanging with her cat, Catniss Everclean.



Tess Bellamy is a junior at Miami University with a Professional Writing major and Spanish and Latin American Studies minors. She is from Loveland, Ohio. When not writing, she likes to paint, draw, cook, pamper her senior rescue pup, make beauty products, and garden. In her future, she hopes to have a career in editing or the culinary industry.



Paige Bremner is a junior Professional Writing and Creative Writing double major with a minor in Marketing. She grew up in West Bloomfield, Michigan where she developed a love for swimming and water skiing. She enjoys ice skating with the Miami University Synchronized Skating Team, and her post graduation plans include pursuing a career in editing fiction.



Emily O'Connor is a graduating senior with a Journalism and Professional Writing double major at Miami University. She is from Bellefontaine, Ohio and hopes to work in the writing field as a journalist or editor. In her free time, she enjoys playing the acoustic guitar and being with her friends and family.



Haley Jena is a junior Professional Writing and Political Science double major and Interactive Media Studies minor. She's originally from Oxford, Ohio and hopes to work in the writing field in the future as a journalist or editor. In her free time, she loves hanging out with her friends and family, listening to new music, and planning her next travel venture.



Hannah Blackwell is a Professional Writing major, Political Science minor, and Pre Law focus at Miami University from Huron, Ohio. After graduation, she hopes to attend law school and pursue a career in immigration law. Having grown up on Lake Erie, Hannah loves swimming and relaxing by the water in her spare time.



Chase Bailey is a junior at Miami University double majoring in Professional Writing and Creative Writing with minors in French and Italian. He is from Canal Winchester, Ohio. He likes trying new restaurants, sitting in front of the fireplace, and untangling knots.



Claire Podges is a sophomore English Professional Writing major with a Interactive Media Studies minor, and she is from Traverse City, Michigan. She is a member of the English Fraternity Sigma Tau Delta and enjoys free-writing, hiking, and being outdoors in her spare time. Claire hopes to attain a business communication internship in her hometown in the coming summer and aspires to live and work in Chicago following graduation.



Grace Geehan is a senior at Miami University double majoring in Professional Writing and Strategic Communication. She enjoys business communication and writing and plans to work in corporate communications after graduating in May 2018. Grace is from Dayton, Ohio and enjoys reading and playing board games with her family.



Mason Moser is a super senior Creative & Professional Writing major with a minor in Interactive Media Studies and a focus on writing for games. He's from Allentown, Pennsylvania. In his free time he likes to procrastinate writing his science-fiction novel by playing video games or walking his German Shepherd.