

My Second Moment of Reflection:

A Step Further in my Story

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Introduction: *Sleep. Dream. wake up!*

I can't believe the first term has ended and I only have a few months left in a life-changing experience. I have never imagined that my writing would reach this stage of creativity and beautifulness. I have never imagined writing a piece that would be so personal. That reading it would tell you who I am. Even the puzzle structure I had in my mind about how stories are written has changed forever. I think about it as a trip to another world. As something that you want people to live and not just form. I am so happy to present to you my finest stories that I have explained in them a lot of things I could never say before.

When I started this class, I thought that creative writing was about writing creatively, when anything that you write is correct, and you cannot be judged because there are no rules and there's no right or wrong. Now, I think creative writing is about conveying a message indirectly. It is the opposite of formal writing which I have been used to write for my entire life. When I started this UNIT, I thought short fiction was how to write a story and to tell it to other people. Now, I think short fiction is how to convey a message through writing people a group of events from our imagination.

This unit - Short Fiction - challenged me because: I was never used to write stories but rather read stories and now I do not even read stories the same way I used to do before.

Additionally, I used to think that telling people anything is a story, but there is actually more into it. It's about giving context, characters and copying an event the way it is.

In class, I was always fully ready and prepared with my homework, questions to ask, and ideas to share with my peers. I found the opportunity of the invitations of writing was better than having to stick to a prompt as I was able to express myself better. I think that my contributions to workshops became more useful as I know now what would benefit other writers and improve their pieces. I got very used to the class that I do not want to leave it, it became the part of my day where I visit home, where I actually learn something new and benefit, something that is changing who I am rather than things I do in some other classes where I am going to never use again in life. It was an opportunity for me to grow as a mentor and a writer and a storyteller and a public speaker.

In this introduction, I did not describe each story because I believe each story has a story to tell. A moment to be shared. A message to convey. When reading my draft, you will see the huge transition that happened from my first broad drafts to the last specific ones when I make the reader live the events as if they are dreaming.

Now: Sleep (read). Dream (Enjoy). Wake up!

Saeed and Suad

It was 11:00 pm when Suad came back home. She had a feeling of euphoria, one that she had not felt for years. Her father had never allowed her to stay out this late. Overwhelmed with happiness and gratitude, she went to his room and said,

"Thanks for today, Baba!"

"Glad it was fun! Don't stay up too late!"

"Of course. I'm really tired, but it was easily one of the best nights I have ever had with my friends!"

"What did you do?"

"We watched a movie together,"

"Amazing! Which one?"

"New York Minute. It was great, when we were done we went to Emma's house to hang out in her tree house."

"Didn't I tell you not to leave Clara's house?!"

"Sorry Baba, I forgot! I swear!"

"Fine, just go to sleep.... Now!" her father exclaimed in an angry and dismissive tone. Hearing this, Suad could already feel her newfound freedom evaporating before her eyes. As she walked away, those very same eyes welled up with tears. She could not breathe, she felt as if the weight of the entire world was resting on her chest.

Sorry flowed into her heart like water into through a dam. Her family's strong religious views have always held her back in life, she did not have the freedom to express her religious views, chose her friends, show her hair, or even talk to boys. Her dad always wanted her to marry her cousin, whom she loathed very much. The very thought of spending the rest of her life with such a stuck up, arrogant, self-intitiled violent asshole filled her with dread. She has always been scared to even get near him. She could not forget what he had done to her when she was a child.

one day, while Suad was playing in her uncle's backyard, her cousin came and pushed her. She wished that was it but he did not stop there, he jumped on her and forced her into physical contact with him. He threw his body onto her's. He moved back and forth on her, rubbing himself against her over and over. It ruined her childhood forever. Suad was never able to tell anyone what happened that day, but she has repressed that memory, at least for now. All she could think about was whether or not her dad would find out about what happened that night

It was the most special night of her life, it was the night when her dad finally let her go out with her friends after begging him to allow her to do so.

"Baba, I am 21, just let me do it this time and this time only," she begged.

"Why are you asking me all of a sudden?" he replied.

She said, "Baba, I am very mature today, and can totally differentiate between what's right and wrong."

"Suad, we want to spend time with you! Friends come and go but family will always be there for you."

"No, I am feeling lonelier each day and losing more and more friendships. Friends come, but they will only go if you let them!"

"I understand, but I think that you will be fine spending this evening with your family, with us! We love spending time with you!" he said.

She replied in a loving but slightly defensive tone, "Baba, I enjoy that too, but I also enjoy time with my friends, we wanna do some stuff together as we did not hang out in so long!"

"I see," he said.

"But are you sure they are all girls and you will only stay in the house?"

"Yes, Baba, of course!" she said.

Suad went to her friend's house and she immediately knew that it was going to be a very special night. Everybody was shouting "I don't care! I love it!" throwing rhythm and pitch out the window, but just enjoying the beat of the bass and the tune of life. People were jumping up and down, and almost all of them were drunk.

"Do you want a shot?" someone asked her.

"Ummm, no! I don't actually like shots! I like wine more." She lied, never having had alcohol in her life but still wanting to fit in.

Another girl came to her with a glass of wine and said, "Here you go! Enjoy your night!"

"uhh, no thanks," she stammered, "I don't actually like wine! I like... uhhh... shots! I like shots more."

Nobody knew she was running back and forth because she did not drink, nor did she have any desire to. If her dad ever smells her like she did, he would probably kick her out of the house.

She was still able to act like she was drunk so she could be like the other girls. She did it so professionally that she attracted all the guys around. It was when she met Saeed however, that the world stood still. Suad had always heard of Saeed and secretly like him. She knew he was Arab, like her, and that if there is even the slightest chance for her to live somewhere else, it would be by marrying him. "He is the man of my dreams, and he is leaving to do his Ph.D. in a few days too. I wish I could go with him," said in her mind.

Luckily, it was not too late for them to enjoy some time together.

"Do you want to go out for a walk?" he asked.

She hesitated, remembering what her father told her.

"I can't." She replied shyly

"It's okay we won't stay for long let's just catch some fresh air!" he replied.

She said, "okay, let's go!"

They went to the tree house and had some fun. Not playing with the toys up there, but Suad had the most special moment of her life.

"Am I doing it correctly, Saeed?" she said.

He replied, "I do not know, that's my first time too!"

They enjoyed their time very much then each had to leave.

The next day, Suad was woken up by the beautiful sound of the birds, and the intense sun rays were coming to her eye.

Her nanny knocked the door and said, "Yalla, let's go swim outside!"

Suad wore her swimsuit and was ready for her favorite breakfast. Scrambled eggs, pancakes, chocolate milk and much more. It was like her life was becoming perfect. She checked her Snapchat as usual to see many snaps from Saeed: "I love you," "morning bae<3," "let me see you," "your eyes keep charming me," and "I keep thinking of you all day all night." All these captions used to make out her day and every day. Suad took a photo and sent it to him captioning it, "Swim Day!"

As Saeed opened her snap, he was very scared. He started calling and calling her. He sent her lots of snaps. He texted her many times, "Suad, Suad! Don't go! Cover your chest with makeup or something! Suaaaaad!" But, it was too late as her phone was on silent and she left it in her room. Suad did not know what was going to happen next! She was happy as usual to swim with her little siblings as these were the happiest moments of her life at home!

She was walking towards the pool when her dad shouted, "Suad, what's this?" "What's what Baba?" she replied. "I fell from the treehouse."

Her father saw a hickey on her chest. "Fucking liar Suad!" what is that?" he said. "I will fucking kill you in front of everyone bitch! You have ruined my reputation forever!"

It was the moment he knew it all, he regretted everything and was running to his room to get a gun. Suad did not know what to do. She ran out to the street in her swimsuit screaming around and hoping someone will help her. She sprinted to the main street and went in a cab.

"Where are you going?" the driver said, looking at her with surprise.

"Just ride! Go fast! Go fast!" she replied. "Faster!"

Suad arrived at Saeed's house, "Saeed, I need your help! My dad is going to kill me!" She explained how bad her situation was, and their only solution was "to escape to France," Saeed said. He packed up quickly and went to the train station. It was two

minutes late, but he held her on his back, ran after the train and got in. It seems like they have planned it all on their first night.

That same time, her dad has called the police and went crazy into every old street of Denmark, looking for her. He did not get back to his home in five days and he did not eat or drink anything!

"Sorry sir, there is no sign of your daughter in the country," the officer said to Suad's dad. He went back home and never heard again of her and valued his other siblings much more.

About what happened in Amman last week!

omar enters the room with cupcakes.

- Yo, I am starving, thank you for the cupcakes.
- I already ate, don't worry! Did you finish your work?
- Not yet!
- Then don't sit on your bed!
- okay, okay. I wanna tell you something.
- yes?
- This week was the worst for me. I feel I'm drowning!
- why? what happened?
- Did I tell you?
- No.
- I was going to get raped!
- Lol! what?
- on my way to the gym last Friday. A man who looked 30 stopped for me and offered me a ride.
- You didn't accept it, right?
- No! As I saw him old enough, I said there would be no problem. I went in and we started talking about gymming and about our experiences.
- why the heck would you accept a ride from a stranger?
- He was asking my about me heart rate when I work out and all of a sudden, he said, "let me feel your heartbeats now."
- okay?

- He touched my chest in a weird way. He was moving his hand on it telling me it feels really healthy and good, then he asked if I was a smoker.

- wait, do you smoke?

- No, I only do it like once a month.

- why? why?

- It's fine, I am not addicted to it. I only do it once a month.

Anyway, he offered me a cigarette after and-

- Did you take it?

- No, I told him I am going to the gym, and they both don't work out together.

- okay...

- He looked strangely to my eyes then he asked about what was in between my laps and I thought he was talking about my phone that was there.

- Yes... Did he take it from you?

- No, but as he approached his hand towards it, I knew what he wanted to touch my d*ck. I told him to let me out of the car immediately.

- oh my god! Did he touch you?

- No! No! He locked the door, I hit him, ran out and took a picture of his car number. He kept following me but as there were people around I could make it to the gym safely.

- why the fuck would this filthy animal follow you after what he had done?!

- Bro I don't know. I was freaking out. I was on the phone with my friend the entire time. I was talking like a little kid trying to hide my emotions, but couldn't. And I was like if anything happens to me, call the police.

- You called your friend? Not your parents?

- No. Of course, I am not going to call my parents.

- why?

- what the heck? If they know that I accepted a ride from a stranger, I would never be able to go out again.
- Shit!
- And, you know that my parents keep travelling so if they knew I was harassed, I would be locked at the house 24/7!
- Shit! Shit!
- And now my friend's cousin got me his name and we are going to teach him a lesson this weekend.
- what?
- Yes, he works with the central intelligence!
- No bro! Don't go!
- I don't know, I might just go to watch him being hit and so that he this asshole learns a lesson.
- I don't think you are doing the right thing!
- well, just that you know bro, this is my second time being harassed sexually in a car.
- what?!
- Last time, it was with an Uber driver.
- what the fuck bro? That's not okay! why didn't you tell me before?
- It's okay! I didn't know you back then.

iPhone rings.

- Peace be upon you! How are you?
- I am well, mom! How are you?
- Good habibi (Arabic word meaning: my dear)!
- How's all? It's okay... it's been a tough week at school and I can't wait till Thursday.
- Yateek alafiya (Arabic word meaning: may God give you health)!

- Thanks mom! All is well!
- Great!
- Mama, I was wondering if I can go with Hashim this weekend to the farm.
- who will be going with you guys?
- Some other friends and his cousins.
- Are there any adults?
- Yes, his cousins! They are 27 years old!
- No, I mean his parents or so.
- Only his cousins, but they are very mature.
- You can't go!
- why? Just because your dad and I think that it won't be safe!
- Mom, come on!
- No, just go to your grandparents house this weekend!
- No, I don't want to. I don't enjoy a single bit of my time there. Just let me go out with friends!
- Please understand me, we trust you so much, but you will be all guys alone so no.
- what do you mean? You think we will get drunk? or smoke weed? That's BS mom!
- watch your language when you are talking to me!
- Alright! As you wish! I am sure I will enjoy my time a lot with your parents!
- Its fine you'll go to malls with them.
- Mom, what malls? who goes out to a mall on weekend? Please no.
- No, I won't enjoy a single but of time with these two who one can't even hear anything that I say, and the other will die today or tomorrow.
- Great! Since they will die, you can be left alone, and do whatever you want to.

Call disconnects.

- See bro. She has that feeling whenever anything happens with me even if I don't tell her.
- She doesn't know about what happened with you in Amman last week?
- No! Hell No! But, she knows or she feels. I don't know!
- Call her again!
- okay.

It keeps showing line busy. She doesn't want to answer.

- Never mind.

Message received, it says: "Don't talk to me again until you learn how to respect us and your grandparents. And yes, don't forget to sign in this weekend, because I don't think I want my parents to be with you!"

- Shit bro! It's okay, just call her and apologize.
- Last weekend, same thing happened. I swore at some people while she was on the phone. She thinks I am just being rude all the time.
- You never know. Maybe, it better for you not to go out this weekend.
- Maybe... whatever, let me complete my homework now.
- Okay, yeah! Just sleep immediately after you're done!
- Yes, I'll do!
- Alright! Have a good night!
- Good night! You are truly my best friend!
- You are too! See you!
- See you!

The Land of Zotopia

"Hutchi Patcha Kitvi Rosho Zotopia!" I heard. I did not understand anything but was lost in the beautiful rays of light reflecting my eyes which blocked me from seeing anything. I started to focus and found out that all I was looking at were diamonds. I decided to collect as much as I can in my backpack.

My hand approached the pile, and I couldn't feel anything. I opened both hands and tried to gather more of them. Nothing was sticking to my hand. I could not feel anything. I pinched myself but knew it was all happening in my head and that nothing was real. It was truly going on. I started walking between the large mountains of diamonds among the island. I was able to walk into them. I panicked at first.

Questions started swinging back and forth in my head. It approached my pointing at herself saying "Shututa, Shututa, Shututa!" Shututa looked like humans if I were to ignore her glistening skin. "So where am I right now?" I said. She replied, "Kutchu pitcho ritchiay." I did not understand a word, but she was wearing a watch I could recognize. She kept pointing continuously at it as if we were running out of time.

I kept walking and finally found something tangible. It was a "rainbow water," as I would call it. The finest colorful water I have ever drunk. It tasted sour and sweet and hot and cold all at the same time. I drank until I was not able to swallow a drop.

I looked at the sky to see that the number of the clouds was decreasing. They were popping out. Fading into the sky. I kept running but twice as fast aiming at no destination, fearing time. I spotted a hole in the ground that was growing smaller and smaller. The sign "exit," was drowning into it. I sprinted aiming to go into the hole. I thought it was the only exit. "Shooooot!" I screamed. I went in and jumped.

I could pass through solid objects so I did and jumped into a radius of a meter. I was falling down, then I got my head up, and I woke up. "Mom, I want a glass of colorful water?" I said. I went out of my bed and tried to go outside through the glass door. My head bumped, and I went back to bed.