

A photograph of a tree silhouette against a bright sky, with a house and bushes in the background. The tree is the central focus, with its branches spreading out. The background shows a house with a chimney and some bushes. The overall tone is bright and somewhat ethereal.

Who Am I?

By Katherine Law

Dedication

To my family and friends, for their support and inspiration.

Preface

This book was made using the program Adobe InDesign. The topic of my book is the pieces of writing I've done in school that describe me and that I'm proud of. The layout wasn't exactly planned, although I had done a rough sketch of what the book might have looked like, but it was mostly me playing around with the placement of the text and seeing what looked good. The most challenging part of the project was doing my memoir and putting it together in a way that looked good. A lot of things went well, and I was surprised at how much didn't go wrong. The memoir is about what I like to do and what makes me feel comfortable, and I wanted the book to reflect that, so the layout isn't very complicated, and the writing isn't too boring.

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Chapter 1: Memoir

The Past Four Years

I can't really remember when I started to draw. Maybe it was in the second grade, when I made friends with someone who did draw. I thought she was so good at it. So I tried, in an attempt to emulate her. I hadn't realized how hard it would be to learn how to copy real life accurately, and I was about to learn.

I went home and grabbed a pile of scratch paper, and drew until I found a style I could work with. That pile of paper was probably almost gone by the time I was done with it, filled with strange pencil drawings that almost looked like something, but not enough like it. It felt like it took the whole day. I remember just sitting there, thinking about how to draw a person so that it actually looked like a person. It wasn't easy, but eventually I found a way to draw a person that looked – somewhat – better than my previous attempts.

I drew the same way throughout elementary school. I don't know why I didn't change my style at all. Maybe it was because I was doing well with that way of drawing, so I didn't have to improve it or anything. I was satisfied with it. And I don't really know why I wanted to continue drawing, with all the frustrations that come with it when you can't draw something right. Maybe it was because I didn't have to improve, therefore I faced fewer frustrations. Or maybe I liked the challenge. I don't know, but I

kept doing it.

Then in the sixth grade, I met another person (who eventually became one of my friends) who could draw, a lot better than I could at the time. I wanted to go into a new school with something that would get me noticed, and I thought maybe I could do that with my art, if I improved it a lot. So I asked her how she learned to draw the way she did, and she gave me a website on how to draw manga style. I went, I drew, and I learned.

It was hard to get the hang of it at first. I drew a few whole notebooks full of crap before I could draw decently, which was around the end of sixth grade. By then though, whenever I was doing a group project, I was always given the job of poster designer. The upside was that I didn't have to write on the poster, just draw the graphics. Probably because to them, drawing is much harder than writing. Everyone in my classes knew me, but I think that would have happened anyway, good artist or not. In other words, I'm not sure if it was my art that made me known. But I hadn't thought of that at the time. I don't think it matters anyway.

During the summers I drew in my spare time. I had to go to Chinese school on Saturdays, and when I thought it was too boring I just doodled. Sometimes I get good drawings that way, on the back of my worksheets. I know that I'm not supposed to

doodle in class, but I get bored in class, and boredom produces good artwork, for some reason. But I had noticed that if I get too bored and I don't doodle, I pay attention less. If I multitask and draw and listen to the lesson at the same time, which I've tried and it does work for me, I can pay attention and not get bored. It's been working well so far.

What I hadn't known about drawing was that once your art gets better, it gets harder to meet your own standards once in a while. I learned later that it was called a block, artist's block, and art block, doesn't matter. All I knew was that it didn't feel good. What helped was to either look at your own drawings that you liked, or art that you admire, or just stop for a while. Either way, it lets the ideas build up until you have to get it out. Maybe it only works for me, and maybe there are better ways of getting out of a block. But I don't know it, and I don't think I really need to.

When I get inspired by something, it doesn't really matter what, and I have an idea in my head and I draw it, usually it comes out not so good the first time, so I have to redraw it, until I like it. Then I go through the process of making my drawings neater so I can color it. I've done a lot of drawings that I really like by doing this. Sometimes I look at past drawings I've liked at the time, and then find that I don't like it anymore because there are so many things I would like to change. But other times, I look at an old drawing I liked at the time, and find that I still like it,

and there's nothing I would want to change. Those are the ones I think are the most significant, and those are the ones I use for inspiration when I'm in a block.

I'm not sure what happened in seventh grade. All I know was that my grades got low because I didn't do homework, or at least, not all of it. It got better near the end of the year, but it wasn't so good in the middle. That time was pretty stressful, so I got it out through artwork. Maybe that's why my art improved a lot during that time. Because I had a lot of stress, there was a never-ending flow of ideas. It probably wasn't the happiest artwork I've ever done, but it helped me improve.

After that, I just kept drawing. During my whole eighth grade year, I wasn't satisfied with my style anymore. It was almost like a huge block that lasted a couple months, but I could get ideas out. That year, I focused on changing my style for the better. I started basing my style on something other than manga, and look at other artists' styles. My style started changing, until it was a mixture of old, and new.

Before, I used to ink and color my drawings by hand with color pencil. I still do that, but I think my coloring has gotten better. I use more colors now, with different lighting. But now that I have a printer that has a scanner, I can get my inked drawings onto the computer, and color it there. It's a little harder, if you

haven't gotten used to controlling the mouse, but I have gotten used to it, so it isn't as hard for me. I can get effects on the computer that would be harder to get on paper, with color pencils. I think my art has improved because I color using technology.

I think that was all the major events that have happened to my art and me, and what I think is important. It hadn't struck me that I have a talent until now, actually. I just thought of it as something I could do, not something that I could do that not many other people could do. Maybe it was because a long time ago, before I wanted to draw, I had convinced myself that I don't really have a talent. I think I know that I do have one now, and it sets me apart from everyone else.



Chapter 2: About Writing My Chapter

When I started writing my chapter, I couldn't think of a subject for my memoir. At first I thought of doing a memoir on my culture, and I could keep adding to it so that it wouldn't seem too boring. I looked at my "First Thoughts" writings and all the other organizing things we did, but I couldn't get an idea. Just when I thought that my memoir project wouldn't be something that I'd be proud of, I looked at a paper with lists of ideas for subjects. So I picked 'talents' and I went with that.

After I thought of the idea, I didn't think it would be too hard to get 3-4 pages typed. When I hand wrote my rough draft, the ideas just kept coming, and even the introduction wasn't too hard, since I knew exactly what I wanted to write about, and I had already reached one page front and back and 3/4 of another page without the last few paragraphs. I thought that would be at least 1 1/2 pages typed and double spaced. When I wrote the memoir, I didn't think about using any of the strategies, but I guess I had used Thought Shots without knowing. The strategy I didn't that I didn't use was Exploding the Moment. In my second draft, I had to use more sensory details, but I wasn't sure how to do that, so I just tried the best I could.

I didn't have too many challenges writing my chapter. The only thing I found truly challenging was getting started. I might

have been distracted by other things I was thinking about at the time, but I completed assignments on time and met the due dates for the most part.

From writing my chapter, I learned to write in sensory details a little better. If my next assignment requires me to use sensory details, I'll know how to do it. I think I made good use of the time provided, because I did complete everything on time, and nothing was late. Overall I think I did well on my assignment.

Chapter 3: Poems

“I Am”

I am myself
I wonder what to do
I believe in the future
I live where I feel at home
I defend what I believe
I want to know more
I am unchanged

I am myself
I feel half empty
I make myself think
I worry about the world
I love to wonder
I pretend to know
I am changing

I am myself
I don't want to stay the same
I won't believe just one thing
I understand myself
I enjoy my free time
I work when I need to
I am changed.

“Yo Soy”

Yo soy mi mismo
Yo pregunto que hacer
Yo creo en el futuro
Yo vivo donde yo siento en casa
Yo defendo que yo creo
Yo quiero saber más
Yo soy inalterado

Where I'm From

Where I'm from smells like the smoke from the cars on the
highway

and the rain from the wetness of spring.

Where I'm from tastes like Chinese food, my dinner

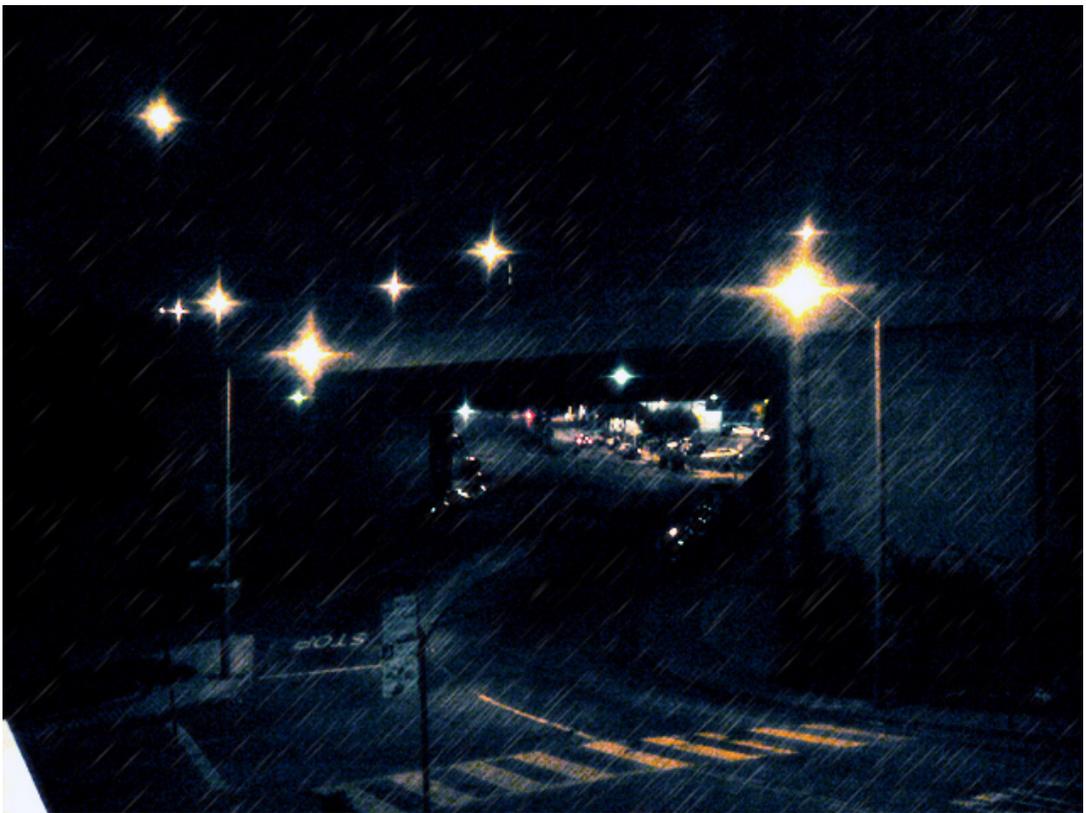
Where I'm from looks like a messy room
a computer desk with school work piled high on the side.

Where I'm from sounds like the Chinese radio my dad
listens to

and the cartoons on TV my sister watches.

Where I'm from feels like home

Where I'm from is my life.



Chapter 4: Personal Philosophy

Testimony

I am Lao Tse and I lived in China from 606 to 530 B.C., and I am the first Daoist philosopher. I lived in troubled times, when the Zhou empire was weakening and couldn't assure security for the people.

The best form of government is democracy, although the less government there is, the better. People can govern themselves and things will go their natural ways. Leaders aren't there to make rules, only to guide and support the people.

People can be trusted to govern, because if they practice wu-wei, which is action through non action, things will go their natural order, and there won't be any problems. They already know how to live; they don't need a leader to give them rules on living.

I oppose Thomas Hobbes' beliefs because he believes that people are naturally evil and need a leader to control them. People are born good and evil, but they don't show one side more than the other. They should find and follow the Way of things, and there won't be any problems. If they are left to their own devices, there won't be any need for a leader.

Did the last form of government make people happy? Didn't

they decide to remake that government? Leave a society alone, let them follow their natural order, and they will be happy and prosper.

Testimony Reflection

I agree with most of Lao Tse's beliefs, but I don't think that people should have absolutely no government. It should have some sort of leader, and some rules. Rules that a kindergarten classroom would have. Releasing a whole society of people who are used to having a government and letting them do whatever would be too much trouble.



Chapter 5: Artist Statement

Good evening, my name is Katherine Law, and the title of my chapter is “The Past Four Years”. My memoir is about when and how I started drawing in my life. It talks about the struggles and challenges I had when I first started, and the accomplishments I’ve had. It also talks about the people involved in the process, and how they helped or inspired me.

The excerpt I’m going to be reading is about when I had learned to draw the way I wanted to, and one of the difficulties I learned about when you start to get better at art...

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“What I hadn’t known about drawing was that once your art gets better, it gets harder to meet your own standards once in a

while. I learned later that it was called a block, artist's block, and art block, doesn't matter. All I knew was that it didn't feel good. What helped was to either look at your own drawings that you liked, or art that you admire, or just stop for a while. Either way, it lets the ideas build up until you have to get it out. Maybe it only works for me, and maybe there are better ways of getting out of a block. But I don't know it, and I don't think I really need to."

Thank you for listening, and enjoy the rest of your evening.



About The Author

Katherine Law was born in San Francisco, California. In her free time she likes to watch TV, maybe go online or doodle. She doesn't really have any plans after high school except college. She goes to City Arts and Technology high school in San Francisco. Her hobbies are reading books, and listening to music, sometimes writing journals or just getting things out.

Acknowledgements

I want to acknowledge my teachers, who helped to inspire the subject of this memoir by reminding me where my talents were; otherwise I would have written something less interesting. Also to my parents for encouraging my creative side all these years, and for their feedback on the memoir. Thanks to the people I am friends with and my sister, who have helped with inspiring me many times before, whether they knew it or not, and for creating some of the memories in the memoir.



Summary

A story about the past and present, what has happened and what will happen. Also contains poems about the life of a girl named Katherine. The memoir inside is about what she likes, what makes her comfortable.

Reviews

“A passionate story about the calling to become an artist. A must-read for those on a creative quest of their own!”

-Allison Rowland, CAT Vice Principal