

The Written, The Writing, The Read

For the tiny read notebook: In the talent show in 3rd grade I read Haikus in front of the entire population of Letford Elementary school. I wrote them in a pocket-sized red moleskin that turned rusty-brick colored when I kept it in my jeans and backpack. I used to write everything in a journal. Because that made the first draft sacred. The first thoughts, a copy that was allowed to roam in their fossilized forms. I'm not sure if I manifested my separation from the rest of my generation. By doing something on my own, sacred, exposed and longing to be cast out so I could bore myself into the shut doors of my peers.

For the broken old typewriter: My 13th Birthday I begged for a typewriter. I was under the impression that someday I might become a famous novelist and every famous novelist has a typewriter. A typewriter was a badge to a secret society of writers. It made me part of the club, because no person has ever wanted a typewriter other than to type something. I wanted to tap dance out of my childhood on ivory clicking keys, through a canopy of books and to be regarded as someone who has something to say. There is something simple and tactile about the smacking of the ink on paper. Something that once made writers keep typing.

For the yellow notes in a box under my bed: They used to be flying off my ceiling. Cascading down to my bed and my eyes. The yellow notes. Ms. Mueller cut little yellow rectangles of paper and left them on her desk. I think I wrote about three notes every week that year. What I like about the yellow notes is that they didn't have to be grateful or apologetic or in love or congratulatory. I wrote them in a few words and I wrote them in many. I wrote pages and pages on legal pads expressing my admiration, and I wrote "Hope you're okay" sometimes because I didn't have time for more. The yellow notes would arrive right in the middle of a math test that you were desperately trying not to fail, or between fights with your project partner who was supposed to be your best friend. The yellow notes were sacred. You didn't have to sign your name, you didn't have to say anything at all. Sometimes you saw glimpses of them in binders and books and backpack pockets. Sometimes they ended up on hallway floors and that felt sad but not tragic.

And for the written poems, for the writing on a typewriter, the yellow notes read in libraries and on buses and in bedrooms while parents yell through the walls, I write. Because one day we will be looking through windows and I might not be a poet anymore, but I will always have words whether they are written, writing, or read.

-Eloise Nelson