

Craig Simons' Log
Friday, June 12, 2009

It is finally Friday. I had survived the first week. Eight hours of class, writing journals, reading homework, whiney writers, 8000 calories a day and enough 'thank you's' to fill a Hallmark store. It was more than I had bargained for. But I was beginning to think I was going to make it.

Every morning this week I told myself that I was going to eat breakfast at home and cut back on the smorgasbord in class. My tailor had let my pants out so many times this week he gave me my own parking space in front of his store. But Maritza and Margaret brought donuts and fruit today. A little fruit can't hurt, right? Maintain my blood sugar. Maybe one donut.

A marathon today? The only kind of marathon I feel ready for is a "three stooges" marathon. But people seem pretty psyched. Where are we going to go? When? What do we do? Remember what Paula says, if anybody asks whether it be border patrol, cemetery attendants, waitresses, "we are writers."

Adrian is going to try and wow us today with "something different" with his log. Graphic novels. Persepolis. A heated discussion on using these in the classroom. Adrian is clearly trying to get credit for his demo, but still impressive stuff. After a lively discussion like that, I think I deserve another donut.

Mary Beth's turn. Surviving adolescents or surviving adolescence? You decide which is harder.

After a quick writing session, Lyon uttered those words that many of the hermits in the class had been fearing all week: peer review. Ladies and gentlemen, get out your rotten tomatoes. Put away all your vulnerabilities and insecurities, because inside this literary octagon, your fear has no place. Only one rule: no blows below the margins. People that probably stole a parking space from you at the HEB only last week were given full freedom to judge your thoughts on paper. I'm going to need another donut to make it through this.

But last week is gone. These are the people with whom we have shared all week. Shared our thoughts, our tears, and our most vulnerable: our writing. No jeers, no competition. Just three positives. And maybe one or two 'not positive' - constructive -developmental-peer editorial-analytical or just say it, Paula! negative comments! But remember to say thank you, because as Lourdes says, "God is watching."

Now for some writing time. But there will be no dilly dalliers here. For all those that are afraid of commitment, Paula is talking to you. You must decide here and now what you will do for the next thirty minutes. E-anthology! Research! Personal narrative! Demo! Peer review! But maybe a quick donut just to give my brain some creative fuel.

Finally time for lunch? Not yet. One quick poem by William Stanford before we depart. "Things I learned last week." Too many come to mind. But just share one.

Writing is hard.
There's a lot to learn in writing.
Paula likes it when we get here on time.
Don't forget to say thank you to Mary Beth.

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Eating and writing go hand in hand.

12:00. Time to marathon like you've never marathoned before. But where to go? Chick fil A? The library? The park? The museum? The cemetery? Now, go little ones! Go see Brownsville and be inspired! Just be at Carinos at 2:00, and remember, "we are writers."

5 minutes. 10 minutes. 30 minutes. No restrictions, no guidelines, no prompts, no poems, no thank you's and thankfully, no more donuts. Just writing. Write what you see, write what you think, or what you think you see or what you see that you are thinking. Write a poem. Write a story. Make it funny. Make it sad. Make commentary. Make it personal. Just don't be late to Carinos.

And now for the moment of truth. Speaking into a microphone. Why people get so nervous with a microphone, maybe someone else can write about that, but I do not know. Maybe it's the fear of having garlic bits in your teeth. Maybe it's Paula and her paparazzi taking pictures. Or maybe after all that sugar that morning, people are starting to crash. But through it all, we all presented our work, our thoughts, our experiences, our fears, and then feasted as if we hadn't eaten since licking the remnants of crumbs out of the donuts box. And we were all better writers for having done it. Thank you. No, no, no, thank *you*!