







INTERESTED IN READING THE SUBMISSIONS IN THEIR ENTIRETY? SCAN THE QR CODE ON THE WALL AND VIEW THE "ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS IN WRITING" PAGE!





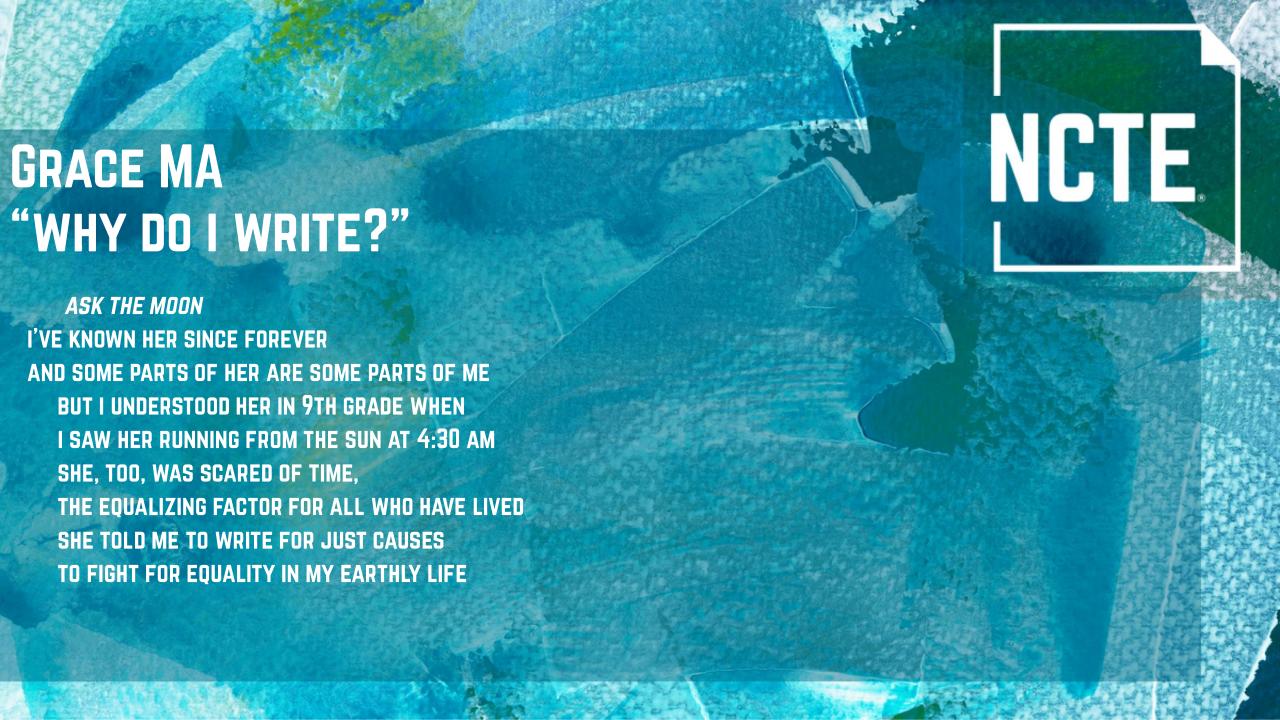
I DUMP ALL OF MY MIND'S CONTENTS OUT AND WATER MY WORDS WITH THEM, AND NO ONE APPRECIATES THEM LIKE WORDS DO.
THEY SOAK IT UP THROUGH THEIR ROOTS AND BLOOM INTO BEAUTIFUL GARDENS,

AND PEOPLE CAN LOOK AT THOSE GARDENS AND TELL ME HOW BEAUTIFUL THEY ARE, AND WITH EACH COMPLIMENT MY BUCKET GETS HEAVIER, BECAUSE WHERE WERE THOSE PEOPLE THE LAST TIME MY BUCKET WAS FULL, BECAUSE THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT IT TOOK TO WATER THAT GARDEN.

PEDRO JUAN ORDUZ "WRITING: MY KEY TO REASSERTING MYSELF"



I NEVER GREW UP IN A WRITING HOUSEHOLD — NEITHER OF MY PARENTS BEING NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS — SO I FEEL LIKE I MISSED OUT ON OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-REFLECTION, FOR FORMING MYSELF... I KNOW THAT WHEN I'M WRITING, I CAN'T LIE TO MYSELF OR OTHERS LIKE I CAN IF I FEEL LIKE I HAVE TO DEFEND MY ACTIONS; THE ONLY CONSTITUENCY I'M TRYING TO IMPRESS IS MYSELF... IF I PUT DOWN THE PEN, AND LEAVE MY THOUGHTS TO THE MERCY OF STOCHASTIC LIFE, I RISK LOSING THE ABILITY OF MAKING SENSE OF MYSELF, OF INTROSPECTION, OF FORMING MY OWN OPINIONS. THE PEN IS MY INSURANCE AGAINST OTHERS TRYING TO EXPLAIN THE WORLD, AND MY OWN SELF, TO ME. WITH THE PEN, I CONTAIN MULTITUDES; WITHOUT IT, WHAT AM I?









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AS I HEAR A BIRD CHIRPING IN THE DISTANCE, IT'S CALL ECHOING THROUGH THE VALLEYS, I CAN INSTANTLY RECALL IT. MAGPIE, I INSTINCTIVELY THINK IN KOREAN, REMEMBERING THE EASY TRICKS THAT GRANDPA TAUGHT ME TO CATEGORIZE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF BIRD CALLS. EVEN THOUGH MY KOREAN IS STILL SHAKY, IT'S AS IF YOU'VE HELPED ME CONNECT WITH MY CULTURE IN A DIFFERENT WAY THAN JUST CONVERSATIONS SHARED OVER THE DINNER TABLE. IT'S BEEN SO LONG — IT TOOK ME THREE YEARS AND A THIRTEEN-HOUR FLIGHT SINCE TO GET BACK TO YOU — AND WHO KNOWS WHEN WE'LL SEE EACH OTHER NEXT? AS WE REACH THE END OF YOUR TRAIL, I THROW ONE LAST LOOK OVER MY SHOULDER INTO YOUR MYSTERIOUS DEPTHS. HERE'S TO MANY MORE ADVENTURES, FRIEND.





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